



JPRS Report

Near East & South Asia

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JPRS-NEA-88-018

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15 MARCH 1988

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REGIONAL

Top GCC Official Enumerates Economic Accomplishments al-Dayhan;
44040080 Riyadh AL-DA'WAH in Arabic
21 Dec 87 pp 14-19

[Interview with GCC official by Khalid al-Dayhan; date and place not given]

[Excerpts] What about the Unified Economic Agreement?

AL-DA'WAH continued its visit with GCC officials when colleague al-Dayhan asked the assistant secretary general for economic affairs about the Council's recent achievements in economic spheres and to what extent these achievements meet its aspirations and goals. Dr 'Abdallah al-Quwayz replied:

"Joint economic activity with the GCC is based on the Unified Economic Agreement, which defines the scope of such activity, on the organizational aspects of the by-laws and on the documents derived from the Unified Economic Agreement.

"This joint economic activity is distinguished by its clear-sightedness, since the agreement provided a foundation for approaches toward such activity. In order to evaluate the Council's economic achievements, we must briefly review these achievements and then make general comments evaluating the approaches and the extent to which they fall short of the goals of economic integration in the framework of the GCC.

1. GCC's Economic Achievements:

Steps taken in the economic sphere maybe placed along seven major goals:

The first goal is to achieve economic [equality] among GCC citizens:

This means equal treatment of citizens of the GCC countries, allowing them to pursue economic activity on an equal footing with the citizens of the member country in which they are pursuing this activity. It also includes free movement of products and means of transportation, as well as equality with their domestic counterparts. The following has been achieved in this regard:

1. Revocation of customs fees on agricultural and animal products and on natural resources products of domestic origin.

2. Allowing producers who are native and who have legal status distribute their products in any member country without the need for a local agent.

3. Giving priority to government projects, domestic products and products of domestic origin.

4. Considering means of transportation owned by citizens of GCC countries the same as domestic means of transportation when they go through any member country, and establishing a unified transit system.

5. Issuing the necessary facilities to boats and ships owned by any member country or by a citizen or a member country and treating them the same as their domestic counterparts.

6. Allowing persons who are native and who have legal status in the GCC countries to pursue economic activity in manufacturing, agriculture, fish and animal resources, contracting, hotels, restaurants, retail, import, export and in maintenance of any of these fields.

7. Allowing some professionals and all tradesmen to practice their professions and trades.

8. Giving citizens of GCC countries the right to obtain loans from banks and industrial funds.

9. Allowing citizens of GCC countries to own residential property.

The second goal is to try to bring the economic policies of the GCC countries closer together and to unify these policies:

The Council has adopted general policies forming an acceptable framework for member countries' approaches as a first stage, in the hope that these general policies would become the basis for future domestic policies. The following documents have been ratified:

1. Goals and policies for the GCC countries' development plans.

2. A joint agricultural policy.

3. A unified strategy for industrial development.

The third goal is to link infrastructures:

In the past, infrastructures were built for domestic reasons. Great efforts have been made in this regard to consult development resources and to link infrastructures to reflect the common interests of the GCC countries. To this end, the following steps have been taken:

A direct land road has been delineated and the remaining links have been included in the development plans of the GCC countries, with the exception of Oman.

A study has been done of communications networks in the GCC countries where deficiencies in the networks are currently being remedied, specifically completion of the links between Saudi Arabia and Bahrain and between Oman and the UAE by fiber optic coaxial cable.

Since studies have confirmed the advantage of linking high voltage networks, deliberations are underway among the member countries to establish a joint body to oversee the setting up and management of a system to distribute electrical energy among the member countries.

The fourth goal is the following joint projects:

Joint projects are an essential pillar in creating interdependence and integration among the economies of the GCC countries. The General Secretariat has studied several projects, some of which have been proven to be economically useful, such as:

1. The seed project.
2. The project of producing superior poultry.
3. The land transport company project.
4. The coastal transport company project.
5. The veterinary vaccine production project.
6. The basic oils production project.
7. The reinsurance company project.

The board of directors of the Gulf Investment Corporation has decided to take part in five new projects and will join the General Secretariat in a preliminary study to investigate several joint projects.

The fifth goal is to establish joint ventures:

The General secretariat views joint ventures as the nucleus for collective action at the implementation level. Two methods have been used in this regard:

1. When there is a common need for a certain service and an apparatus exists in one of the member countries that can meet this need, the services of the apparatus can be used without establishing new agencies in each country or at the regional level.
2. When there is a common need which does not justify establishment of a domestic apparatus, one can be set up to serve all the GCC countries. since establishment of the GCC, the following agencies have been created:

1. The Gulf Investment Corporation.
2. The GCC Organization for Specifications and Standards.

3. The Technical Communications Office, which with its expanded membership has been added to the General Secretariat.

The sixth goal is to establish standard procedures, regulations and laws:

Since its inception, the General Secretariat has given special attention to narrowing the differences among existing domestic regulations and laws to help form a basis for steps toward coordination and integration. The following have been approved:

1. Standard customs forms and records.
2. Agricultural and veterinary quarantine regulations.
3. Regulations governing water conservation and use of water resources.
4. Regulations governing agricultural pesticides and fertilizers, and veterinary drugs and vaccines.
5. Port rules and procedures.

The seventh goal is to adopt a unified position on the international economy:

This is done through collective negotiations with trading partners, coordinating positions when providing development assistance and collective purchasing of essential goods, as illustrated by:

1. Negotiations with the major trading partners of the GCC countries.
2. Offering joint assistance to the YAR and the PDRY.
3. Collective purchasing of basmati rice.
4. Collective participation in international and regional expositions.

II. General Observations:

To begin with, we must point out that the process of integration itself involves long-term assessments; that is, its effects require a long period of time to evaluate. For this reason, the following are merely general observations:

Most of the GCC countries are young countries and place great importance on sovereignty, which limits the scope of joint action.

The GCC countries are classified as developing countries essentially because revenues come from the exportation of one material, which means that their production capacities are limited, making it difficult to remove impediments to achieving common bonds and interdependence among the member countries.

The Council has issued several policies and regulations in the economic sphere; however, their adoption is still subject to the good will of the implementing agencies in the member countries, and to achieve results they must become an inseparable part of the domestic economic policy of each member country.

Several steps have not been agreed upon which are fundamental to integration, including:

1. Agreeing to a standard tariff.
2. Standardizing incentives offered to producing sectors.
3. Joint customs protection.
4. Coordination of fiscal and monetary policies.

Undoubtedly, the creation of a vehicle for certain countries to raise objections to these steps maximizes the benefit of earlier steps and helps achieve progress in diversifying the production base.

We must point out that the newness of the bureaucracy in the GCC countries is a positive aspect as an important factor in expediting steps toward integration taken previously.

It has been observed recently that slow economic growth resulting from decreased demand for oil and reduced prices will make the countries more hesitant to finance joint projects and to agree to establish new joint ventures. In fact, this attitude runs contrary to the efforts being made to expand the production base and would limit positive attitudes toward growth.

[Box, p 19]

Facts and Figures

The basic goals of the GCC are represented by four major issues:

Bringing about coordination, integration and interdependence among the member countries in all spheres.

Promoting and strengthening the ties, links and aspects of cooperation that currently exist among GCC citizens in various fields.

Establishing identical regulations in various spheres.

Encouraging scientific and technical progress in industry, mining, agricultural and water and animal resources, establishing scientific research centers and joint projects and encouraging private sector cooperation, which would be beneficial to the people.

Article II of the by-laws stipulated that "The headquarters of the GCC shall be in the city of Riyadh in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia." Article III stipulates that "The Council shall hold its meetings in the country where the headquarters is located or may meet in any member country."

There are three bases for the legal framework of the GCC: the preamble to the by-laws, the charter of the League of Arab States and the charter of the United Nations.

The type of cooperation approved by the member countries of the GCC does not legally contravene the Arab League Charter because its goal is to serve the lofty goals of the Arab Nation and the Islamic Nation.

9882/12232

Chad Government Staffer Discusses Islamic Legion Moves

45040063a Khartoum AL-RAYAH in Arabic
23 Jan 88 p 3

[Excerpts] People informed about the inner workings of Chad policy say that Mr Muhammad Nuri, the vice chairman of the National Federation for Independence and Revolution, the ruling party, and the party's foreign affairs commissioner, is a pillar of the Chad regime and a source of special importance regarding Chad's domestic and foreign relations, as well as being a tenacious fighting man.

We met him in Khartoum at the end of his visit in response to an invitation he received from the National Islamic Front to attend the second general conference. Mr Nuri attended in the company of Mr Khamis Haqqar, member of the party's executive committee.

This meeting was an opportunity for a long tour of the various areas of the complex Chad issue and a quest for enlightenment concerning the Chad point of view on a number of bewildering questions which the news is broadcasting today on the subject of the Chad conflict, whose internationalization has reached a point that has made it an important indicator of international politics in the region.

Our questions which we brought to Mr Nuri were not the whole situation, and his answers were not the final word. Rather, it has been an activity by which we hope to open all possible dialogue or comments from the parties concerned with the issue, within the limits of the press' service of the truth, and investigate views regarding an issue which has become one of the most important concerns of Sudanese national security, in view of the repercussions it has on this.

Mr Nuri's answers raise many issues which many people had thought were settled. His conversation was distinguished by much of the clarity and frankness which we

hope will be of help in an examination of this complex issue and at the same time they maintain a full opportunity for various views concerning the Chad issue.

Although there was an obvious sharpness to our questions, our consolation lay in two things, first, Mr Nuri's generous acceptance of it, and second, our presenting the charges that are actually circulating to the man's guest residence so that he could hear the other side. In spite of the language barrier between us and the person with whom we conversed, this conversation retains special significance.

[Question] We have become acquainted with the National Federation of Independence and Revolution. What is it doing in Chad and what is the nature of the political structure?

[Answer] The National Federation of Independence and Revolution is a party which was formed directly after the war as part of the [Qurulina (Khan)] Liberation Front, which is the liberation army of northern Chad. It is a party which embraces all Chad's fronts. We can say that it is closer to a comprehensive organization of effective political forces than a political party. Through this organization or front—with its enlightened political forces which are concerned with the interests of the nation and are in consensus over a single statement and a single view which will realize national sovereignty, economic prosperity, and social and cultural progress—the circumstances the country is going through now have caused us all to stand at the present time behind a single party. In 1979 there were 11 political parties in Chad. Ten of these parties were oriented toward fealty to Libya. We alone have remained on the national stage.

[Question] What is the Chad government's evaluation of the relationship with the Sudan now?

[Answer] We constantly repeat this statement that a similarity approaching kinship exists between the Sudan and Chad. We have relations with all African countries but our relationship with the Sudan is an excellent one and has roots which go deep into history. Most of the two peoples are Muslims and our customs are Arab-Islamic. Though the Sudan is distinguished by the dominance of Arab Islamic culture in full and the French language is dominant in Chad, we are trying to create a kind of particular character in our relations with the Sudan [through] all these ties in the form of neighborliness, blood and Islam. However, recently, some border tensions have occurred which Libya created in the effort to establish another fighting front on the Sudanese borders. We are stating this by way of mentioning facts, without attacking the government of the Sudan. In the past there were Libyan forces which entered Darfur. They included some which made an attack on Chad, especially after Chad had attacked the Libyan forces in Fada, Ouzdi Doum, Faya, and Ouadi Sirr. After this attack, the Libyans sought to open a new front on the Sudanese borders. We now acknowledge that Libyan military

forces have no presence, but the forces of the Islamic Corps are in Darfur. We know that Libya's goal is to disrupt stability in Chad, and they have attacked Chad at various border locations.

[Question] Can you name these areas?

[Answer] Of course. We know that their fundamental base is Rahad al-Bardi, and they are pursuing various routes, including the al-Tinah area. We know of all these movements. They start from Maleit, pass west of Kab-kabiyah and east of al-Junaynah and reach Rahad al-Bardi and Khawr [Barnaqa]. They are now recruiting some people from Khartoum. These in brief are the conditions which harm Sudanese-Chad relations, and we hope that these causes will be eliminated.

We wish Darfur stability and have no interest in having its security conditions assaulted. This is a fact which I can state to you. We are familiar with war and we ourselves are good at it. In the period 1979-1982, we regressed many centuries, and Chad was turned into a jungle in which dominance went to the strongest. Conditions have changed now, order and stability have returned to Chad and the people of Chad have come to know the value and importance of stability.

You in the Sudan have not had this experience and I hope that you will not, because it is a bitter, cruel one. We say it frankly: your undefined relations with Libya — and we have warned the Sudanese government previously — could lead you to these results. The first time they entered the Sudan they exploited its territory to attack us, during the transitional period.

We say that the outrages that are occurring now in Darfur will not affect our relations with the Sudan because what links us is more than political relations. It is the peoples that remain, in spite of the change of government.

[Question] We know that official delegations and visits have been exchanged between the Sudan and Chad and that agreements have been concluded. What has happened with respect to the execution of these agreements?

[Answer] In the recent period, for about 5 months, no contacts have taken place between us, but we are all trying to end the border problems. The Sudanese government denies that the forces of the Islamic Corps are present in spite of our assertions and our informing them of the possibility of the presence of these forces. What we do know is that the Sudanese government has started to intensify the process of controlling the borders in some areas, and in our estimation this step deserves appreciation.

[Question] How do you imagine a solution to these problems, which assume the form of a contradiction in statements and positions and security tension in Darfur?

[Answer] In our view, the solution lies with the Sudanese government. Putting a halt to the Libyan flow, controlling the movement of arms and armed persons and searching the armed pockets left in the Sudan in minute detail lie with it.

[Question] However, there is a charge whose gist is that the armed groups which are appearing in Darfur have some connection with Chad. By this we mean the groups that are carrying out armed robbery.

[Answer] In our view, the purpose of this charge is to create confusion over the Libyan presence in Darfur.

[Question] What if this charge has been cited by the Sudanese government?

[Answer] I am certain of what I am saying. I am convinced that the Sudanese armed forces and the Chad forces can totally control the borders between the two countries. We in Chad are not making weapons, nor is Darfur. There there is an arms factory. Where do these robbers get the arms from then? These charges are a form of camouflage. What is said about the length of the borders and the impossibility of controlling them is incorrect. As you heard recently, they seized Toyota vehicles containing heavy cannons, bazooka rockets and anti-tank mines. We do not have mines, nor have we put them on the Libyan-Chad borders. We do not have this kind of weapon.

[Question] The Sudanese government one day acknowledged the infiltration of Libyan forces through its territory, but what is this Islamic corps, talk which you yourselves make and the Sudanese government denies? What is the truth of its existence?

[Answer] The Islamic Corps constitutes the basic "eyes" of the Libyan army. They are of various nationalities. In 1983 we captured 67 Sudanese in the Faya Largeau region alongside other nationalities. The Sudanese government happened to request that its citizens be delivered to it, and we responded to its request. Some of them were sent to Khartoum. Others preferred to remain in Njamena, claiming that they were opposed to the regime in Khartoum, and we handed them over to the Red Cross. In 1985, we returned 130 Sudanese to Siwar al-Dhahab's government. It is ambassador al-Tayyib Hamidah who carried out all the contacts, which ended with the handing over of the Sudanese. The forces of the Islamic Corps are special forces which carry out specific operations Libya cannot carry out by means of its armed forces. Special forces are well known in war operations, and we carry out special operations, but our armed forces carry those out, and we do not use mercenary forces in them.

[Question] Why has the front in the Chad war shifted from the north to the east, on the borders with the western Sudan? Why this shift?

[Answer] This is not the case. The war front has not shifted and no soldiers have moved from Fida or Faya to the Sudanese borders, because we are confident of the impossibility of war breaking out between Chad and the Sudan and because the army that is present in [Ibshi] and the other adjacent areas is sufficient to restore things to their proper place. This is as far as we are concerned. However, as far as Libya goes, it has the illusion that we will respond to the acts of provocation and will move part of the forces present in the north to the Sudanese borders. This is a military step understood by everyone who finds a way to do it (he laughed). Now we will not take a preventive measure if you allow us to open a fighting front in the al-'Uwaynat area.

[Question] What is the extent of the truth of the statement that recently circulated concerning the contacts between the Chad government and John Garang's movement? If it is not true, in whose interests was this item of news circulated?

[Answer] We informed the brothers in the Islamic Front delegation which visited Chad recently that we were not prepared for war with the Sudan. We are farther from this evaluation in terms of level. We cannot in any case open a war front with the Sudan. What is happening now in Darfur, for example, we are confident will meet with rejection from the Sudanese people. Why should we ourselves add to the deterioration in security by offering facilities to others? Who can say what he wants to?

As I told you before, in spite of the presence of Palestinian combatants on Libya's side and against us, our position on the Palestine cause has not changed, and so forth. What Libya does in Darfur we know, and we appreciate its danger to us and the Sudan, but, in spite of that, we will not give Garang facilities. They can say most simply that Chad will send forces to fight in the Sudan, but the criterion remains the extent of the truth of this sort of allegation. If the Sudan invites some people hostile to Chad to the borders, Chad has the same right, as is happening in the Sudan and Ethiopia, for example, but we want our relationship with the Sudan to improve and we are not thinking, even just thinking, of anything different from that.

11887

Worldwide Muslim Welfare Organization Established
44040108b Riyadh AL-DA'WAH in Arabic
18 Jan 88 pp 34, 35

[Article: "The First International Islamic Legacy: The Islamic World Welfare Organization Adopts a Media Campaign on the Conditions of Muslims: Tragic Present and Bright Future"]

[Text]

First: The Poorest Countries in the World

The number of countries suffering from poverty, indeed living at below the poverty level, come to 36, distributed as follows:

25 countries in the continent of Africa: Chad, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Somalia, the Sudan, Tanzania, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Rwanda, Uganda, Djibouti, Guinea [sic], Equatorial Guinea, Sao Tome, Seychelles.

Eight countries in Asia: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, North Yemen, South Yemen, Bhutan, Maldives and Nepal.

In regard to these countries, it is to be observed that most of their inhabitants are Muslims, be they the majority, in some of these countries, or the minority, in some others. In some Islamic areas the rate of poverty comes to more than 80 percent, as in Bangladesh, Somalia and Indonesia, and less than that in Malaysia and India, where the average per capita annual income does not exceed \$100.

Second: Foreign Debts

This issue is almost a common denominator among most Islamic countries. Of course, this issue has serious effects on the progress, stability and freedom of these countries in the present and future, since these debts do not enable these countries to realize any economic achievements bringing benefit to their peoples and consequently cause them to live in a state of permanent backwardness. In addition to these, their sovereignty and freedom face the danger of foreign intervention through the linkup of their policies to those of the creditor countries.

In the statistics the World Bank issued in 1980, the magnitude of these debts was so immense as to provoke panic. The ratio of these debts exceeded half the total national product: Mauritania, \$714 million, or 139.7 percent of total domestic product, Turkey, more than \$13 billion, or 22 percent of total domestic product, and Pakistan, \$8,875,000,000, or 34 percent of total domestic product.

Illiteracy and Ignorance

This also is one of the most important of issues and, if its magnitude increases in some society and it gets out of hand, it will have the effect of destroying this society and presenting it as a motionless corpse. In previous United Nations statistics, we observe that in most Islamic societies ignorance is widespread and the rate of literacy is frighteningly high. In Pakistan the illiteracy rate comes to 80 percent, in Bangladesh to 80 percent, in Yemen to 90 percent, in Mauritania 90 percent, in Mali 90 percent, in Senegal 90 percent, in Niger 92 percent and in Chad 85 percent.

The Health Aspect

It is natural that the negative effects should be widespread as far as this consideration is concerned, in view of the deterioration of the other aspects, poverty and ignorance, since spending on the health sector is connected to the economic and cultural situation. Therefore we find that most Islamic societies suffer from a deterioration of health conditions as a result of a low level of spending. The number of hospitals, clinics and prevention and treatment units of various kinds relative to the population is hardly worth mentioning. That consequently leads to the spread of diseases, their acquisition of endemic status and their conversion to plagues which rage about the population.

The Cry of Salvation

Proceeding from the responsibility cast on the shoulders of all Muslims, especially the intellectuals, scholars and religious proselytizers among them, the well known Islamic proselytizer Shaykh Dr al-Qirdawi has uttered his cry calling for the pooling of efforts to save the Muslims from the sufferings they are experiencing and therefore to stand up to the encroachment of Christianization. More than 150 Islamic figures in the form of intellectuals, scholars and proselytizers representing all the Muslims in the world have responded to Dr al-Qirdawi's call. These figures met at a charter conference held in Kuwait on 18 June 1982, in the course of which they agreed on establishing the World Muslim Welfare Organization.

The Goals of the World Muslim Welfare Organization

Through the causes and motives which led to the establishment of the World Muslim Welfare Organization, the goals which it seeks to realize have been defined as follows:

1. The effort to prepare food for the hungry, clothing for the unclad, treatment for the sick, care for the motherless and shelter for the dispossessed.
2. The provision of possible aid in cases of disasters, famines and plagues.
3. Participation in the provision of job opportunities for the unemployed, the training of workers and establishment of economic projects.
4. Enhancement of the Islamic personality and the spread of genuine Islamic awareness in accordance with the holy book and the sayings and doings of the prophet.
5. Conveyance of the message of Islam to all people through wisdom and good exhortation, the statement of facts and the disclosure of falsehoods.

6. Participation in the elimination of illiteracy, teaching of the holy Koran and dissemination of the Arabic language.

The Internationalism of the Organization

The Organization has relied on the character of internationalism as a watchword for itself and a platform through which it functions. By internationalism here we mean that it is for all Muslims, wherever they are, within the Islamic world or outside it, where Islamic minorities dwell. It is international in establishment, international in financing, international in investment, international in spending.

A Call for Participation

Food, clothing, medicines — the trinity through which the forces opposed to Islam enter the homes and areas of the Muslims, in which poverty, ignorance and disease dwell, working to turn the Muslims away from their religion and belief through bread for the hungry, clothing for the unclad or medicine for the sick. These forces also work to co-opt hundreds and thousands of Muslim orphan and homeless children on the claim of their adoption by certain rich people who are proponents of falsity.

Here we are not blaming these forces for their activity in spreading their creeds and beliefs. Rather, we are directing blame at ourselves, since we are maintaining silence and refraining from saving our brothers. We are all responsible before God in this, because a person who is not interested in the affairs of the Muslims is not one of them. Muslims as far as Muslims go are like a structure drawing them to one another. Believers, in their mutual affection, mercy and sympathy, are like a single body. Indeed, the believers are brothers, and there are very many indeed who are different from that. Nonetheless, we find real participation in extending the hand of aid to our Muslim brethren only among a few individuals and their generous contributions constitute only a very paltry percentage of the actual needs of poor Muslims who are suffering from disease, hunger and ignorance.

Out of feeling of the danger which has come to threaten the future of the Islamic nation, the declaration of the World Muslim Welfare Organization has been made, in order to collect capital of \$1 billion for investment in economic, health and educational areas throughout the Islamic world.

The forces hostile to the Muslims preceded us and collected billions of dollars under the slogan of "pay a dollar establish a country" and "pay a dollar and kill a Muslim." Today, the World Muslim Welfare Organization is raising the watchword "pay a dollar save a Muslim" or more accurately "pay a dollar save a nation." You, my brother Moslem, have only to take the initiative immediately to help save your nation from waywardness. 11887

Treaties, Regulations Governing Expatriate Employment in GCC Outlined

44040108a Riyadh AL-TA'AWUN in Arabic
Oct 87 pp 64-75

[Article by Ahmad Thabit: "The Movement of Arab Labor to the Gulf: A Study on Arab Labor Agreements and the Cooperation Council Countries' Position Regarding them."]

[Text]

Foreword

There is obvious significance in studying legal conditions and Arab labor agreements which regulate the movement of Arab labor migrating to the Arab Gulf oil-producing countries and the domestic legislation regulating this movement, whether in the receiving countries or in the labor-exporting countries, and in comparing them, in the light of stipulations the collective and bilateral Arab agreements have made in the area of labor movement and training and the extent to which the domestic legislation in the Gulf host countries is in keeping with the agreements and protocols the International Labor Organization has issued and these countries previously agreed to.

On the other hand lies the importance of carrying out a practical comparison between stipulations and bills regulating the movement and reception of migrant Arab labor and actual conditions in this regard. The latter have led to repercussions in living and to cultural, social and political repercussions which require study by Arab researchers and followup by the executive organizations and offices subsidiary to the League of Arab States.

The most important aspects of the movement of migrant Arab labor in permanent or temporary form to the Gulf countries perhaps include the ways in which this labor comes in and the method for regulating the process of moving to work in these countries. One can say that the past years, since the early seventies, have witnessed a general dominant pattern in the movement of Arab labor to the Gulf countries, and that is individual movement, which is based on the workers' efforts and quests for areas of employment in these countries on an individual basis. It is to be noted that the Arab labor-exporting countries have not made noteworthy official efforts to regulate the process of moving to work in the importing countries; at the same time, there has been a state of non-commitment on the part of these two classes of country, jointly, to international or Arab agreements in the area of the exchange of people among Arab countries. More than that, attention to the forms of bilateral agreements and labor forms the Arab conferences and labor ministers have prepared has been lacking. This may perhaps call for the shedding of light on these various agreements regulating the movement of migrant labor to the Gulf countries.

International labor agreements and the Cooperation Council countries' position on them:

The International Labor Organization has issued a tremendous number of international agreements and recommendations regulating the conditions and forms of labor in the various countries of the world and stipulating civil, political, social, economic and financial rights. These agreements and recommendations issued by the organization up to the end of 1983 came to about 327 in number.

Here we will confine ourselves to one of the most important of these agreements, Agreement III concerning discrimination in the area of employment and occupation (1). This is considered one of the basic agreements related to the termination of all forms of discrimination among workers, nationals and non-nationals, regardless of sex, belief, language, race, political opinion and so forth, through emphasis on the requirement that the domestic authorities in the country achieve equality of opportunities and treatment in the context of employment and occupation in order to do away with all discrimination in this regard.

The most important matters this agreement stipulated include the contents of one paragraph of its third article asserting the countries' elimination of all legislative provisions or the amendment of all stipulations or administrative practices which are not in conformity with this policy (2).

Some countries in the world have justified their refusal not to approve this agreement by arguing that it is impossible to guarantee the attainment of equality of opportunity and treatment in the area of employment and occupation in the case of specific groups of inhabitants (locals or immigrants) for reasons related to public security. However, the committee of legal experts in the International Labor Organization, in two of its reports in 1963 and 1971, warned of the abuse of the stipulations in Article Four regarding a country's right to embrace domestic policies which are concerned with the security of the state: the committee pointed out that the measures devoted to protecting the security of the state in accordance with the substance of Article Four of the agreement must be specified precisely and in a manner which entails no form of discrimination founded on political belief or resulting from social circumstances and conditions and practices in effect with regard to appointment to leadership positions or positions of a special character, such as judiciary positions or positions in the prosecutor's office. The committee also emphasized the illegality of policies founded on the grant of preference to domestic inhabitants and discrimination between them and resident foreigners (3).

With respect to the Gulf Cooperation Council countries' position on the agreements issued by the International Labor Organization, one can say that the newness of their experience in functioning as hosts and the newness of their

contact with international labor circles have resulted in the failure of the domestic legislation issued in these countries to keep up with the development which has occurred in the agreements and recommendations issued by the International Labor Organization, especially in the area of workers' rights, in the government or business sectors. The matter becomes even more complex when we realize that some Arab Gulf countries have issued legislation to regulate labor in the government sector alone, to the exclusion of the business sector, and that some others have not yet issued general labor laws — that there just are laws concerned with specific sectors of economic activity, rather, and they do not devote attention to the general principles and rules in the area of appointment, promotion, profits, bonuses and so forth. As regards the abovementioned agreement specifically, only three of the six council countries have approved the agreement — Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Qatar (4).

The movement of labor in Arab agreements:

Joint Arab labor circles have been interested in the issues of the movement of individuals for labor purposes among Arab countries. The Arab economic unity agreement which came out in 1957 is considered the first step in this regard. It stipulated "individuals' freedom of movement, residence and work among Arab countries." Thirteen Arab countries have approved it so far. The conference of Arab ministers of labor held in Kuwait in November 1967 then approved Arab Agreement Two on the movement of manpower, which stipulated "the guarantee of the freedom of movement of manpower in the Arab nation, making that an incentive for economic activity and the realization of full labor." In accordance with the agreement, the Arab countries undertook "to facilitate the movement of manpower among themselves and to work to facilitate official measures bearing on that," provided that each party determine "a competent authority under its jurisdiction to carry out the provisions of this agreement which will take charge of regulating and supervising the movement of manpower." The parties signing the agreement also undertook to exchange all necessary data and information and give priority in employment to Arab workers, and the workers who move to work in them in accordance with the provisions of the agreement were to enjoy the rights and benefits the workers of the country to which they moved to work enjoyed and remittance of part of their wages. The agreement approved the conclusion of bilateral agreements between contracting parties, and to that end presented a form of a bilateral agreement by which the countries desiring that would be guided (5).

Although the Arab agreement on the movement of manpower did not include anything that would permit the Arab migrant worker to be accompanied by his family, the form of the bilateral agreement allowed the worker to submit an application for the accompaniment of his family or its reunion with him, without specifically stipulating what would result from the migrant worker's

submission of such an application. It did not include stipulations, either, on the rights of migrant workers to training and civil and union rights.

At the conference, 14 Arab countries approved the agreement. Only six of the countries agreed to join the agreement — Jordan, Egypt, Iraq, the Sudan, Libya and Syria (6). The Gulf Cooperation Council countries were invited to join the agreement, especially since they were considered basic countries as far as the reception of Arab migrant labor is concerned.

With the first emergence of OPEC and the oil exporting countries as a force with substantial political weight in the Arab and international arenas following the October war, large numbers of people started going from Arab labor-exporting countries for the purpose of working in the countries of the Arab Gulf. That was a reason why the Arab ministers' conference reviewed the abovementioned agreement when it met in March 1975. The conference issued amended Arab Agreement Four for 1975 on the movement of manpower and added stipulations to it which emphasized the harmonization of Arab national interests and the domestic interests of the countries receiving Arab migrant labor. On the one hand, amended Agreement Four asserted the need that workers moving among Arab countries enjoy all rights and benefits given to the labor of the host country. On the other hand, it stipulated the preservation of job opportunities with respect to domestic workers in the receiving country. The agreement took advanced steps in comparison with Agreement Two when it stressed the need to codify the steps and measures bearing on the movements of people among Arab countries. Examples of that are the measures for filling out immigrant workers' labor and residence permits, including the measures of renewing, failing to renew or withdrawing these permits. It even included the conditions for deporting immigrants from the host countries and stipulated the preservation of the worker's right to submit a grievance to the competent body and obtain all sums due, bonuses and benefits granted to him upon leaving the receiving country, along with the grant of a reasonable period of time following the termination of the work permit to him to settle his personal affairs and the affairs of his family.

However, the agreement gave the competent bodies in the host country a period of time of 6 months to review the worker's application to be accompanied by his family, which would give them an unrestricted opportunity for rejection or postponement. On the other hand, the agreement did stipulate that immigrant workers and their families would enjoy the rights and benefits of domestic workers, including union rights, in the framework of the domestic legislation in the host country (7).

This Arab agreement was also signed at the time of the movement of Asian labor to the Arab Gulf countries in high volumes. In the face of this flow, the agreement specified the importance of having the countries signing it work to have Arab labor gradually replace foreign

labor and requested that the contracting countries take charge of establishing a tripartite agency which would include representatives of the workers, employers and the government to investigate the workers and services resulting from the approval of the agreement. It also gave the Arab labor office the task of collecting the data and information necessary for the proper execution of the agreement and coordination of the competent domestic agencies. It should be noted that the number of Arab countries which approved the agreement was also small — indeed smaller than the number that had previously agreed to amended Agreement Two. Just five countries signed — Jordan, Egypt, Palestine, Somalia and Iraq (8).

The third agreement, Agreement Nine for 1977 and Recommendation Two of the same year, regarding vocational guidance and training (9), was issued as a supplement to the previous agreements and stressed Arab coordination in the area of joint vocational training and the establishment of joint training sessions among Arab countries, alongside the gathering of information necessary for increasing the competence of training in the Arab context and the exchange of competent personnel. The importance of the agreement and recommendation arises from most Arab countries' poverty of skilled technical labor and trained human personnel; on top of that, the Gulf labor markets have come to require specific kinds of this sort of scarce labor, which is in keeping with imported technology, to make up for the deficit these markets are suffering from. This is an incentive for bringing in skilled Asian labor, since quantities equal to that are not available from the labor exporting countries in the Arab nation. Once again, only four Arab countries have agreed to the agreement and recommendation — Jordan, Palestine, Iraq and Egypt.

While this is the situation concerning collective Arab agreements on exchanges of people, the pattern of bilateral government agreements for regulating this exchange and codifying the movement of Arab labor from countries of origin to host countries is still not widespread and they are relatively few. Examples of that are agreements between Qatar and Egypt, Qatar and Tunisia and Iraq and Tunisia.

Arab organizations and the movement of labor:

It was pointed out above that the Arab labor agreement of 1975 gave the Arab labor office an important role in facilitating the movement of Arab manpower. However, the small number of Arab countries approving the agreement limited the effectiveness of the role of the Arab labor office in this regard. Nonetheless, the tremendous expansion of the Arab labor market from the mid- to late-seventies and the need to regulate this phenomenon and monitor the social and economic effects which arose from it that imposed dictated the establishment of different Arab organizational forms which would support Arab cooperation in the field of the exchange of people. Therefore the notion of the Arab employment office in the context of the Arab labor organization arose,

and the draft of the organization was presented to the eighth session of the Arab labor conference in March 1980 in Baghdad. The conference decided to agree in principle to its establishment, and specified a transitional period of 2 years, during which the basic foundation of the organization would be prepared, its personnel would be trained and its bylaws would be set out. The most important goals of the organization included (10):

1. The collection and publication of information on the Arab labor market and the movement of employment in a manner which would result in the regulation of this market through its intrinsic resources and reduction of reliance on foreign labor and its dangers.
2. Participation in the absorption of Arab labor, especially competent elements in it, in the Arab countries and the effort to regulate the return of Arab labor from the European countries and direct it to its original countries or host countries.
3. The effort to reconcile the demand for manpower with its supply through participation in mutual Arab training programs.

Although the organization draft stipulated that it and the Arab vocational training center would enter into the stage of execution in March 1982, that has not yet occurred (11).

The 11th Arab summit conference held in Amman (November 1980) approved a national economic action charter and a strategy for common Arab economic activity in a manner which indeed represented a basic turning point, specifically in the area of the movement of labor among Arab countries. The preface to the national economic action charter stipulated that the goal of Arab development was Arab man and that there would occur "the facilitation of the movement of labor and competent persons within the Arab nation, control of their emigration abroad, the return of those present abroad to the Arab nation or enhancement of the benefit from them in place of that. The Arab countries would give Arab workers preferential treatment relative to foreign immigrant labor and treat them in a manner which would be no less than the treatment of their peers who were the natives of the country in each Arab nation, in a manner which would realize necessary guarantees and appropriate incentives for them" (12).

With regard to joint Arab economic action strategy, it stressed the development and improvement of manpower and the workforce in the Arab nation, the guarantee of its freedom to move in accordance with the requirements of economic development in the Arab countries, the maintenance of this manpower within the Arab nation and expansion of the reliance on Arab labor with the objective of reducing reliance on foreign labor. It also stipulated the need to set out policies and adopt decisions which would facilitate the movement of Arab citizens and Arab manpower within the Arab nation (13).

The Cooperation Council countries and Arab labor:

What sets the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council apart is that the preponderant share of Arab labor migrating to work has been present in them since the mid-seventies. As stated previously, some council countries are new to experience with international and Arab labor elements and lack thorough domestic legislation regulating the conditions and labor market in them, in the government sector or the sector of business. At the beginning, we might note that these countries, as most Arab countries except for Syria and Iraq, restrict the Arab worker's right to residence to work permits and their policies vis-a-vis the movement of Arab labor to them from the exporting countries are distinguished, as Dr Muhammad al-Rumayhi says, by being "pragmatic, variable and disorganized" (14).

The most important aspects of the movement of immigrant Arab labor include those related to discrimination between domestic laborers and immigrant laborers with respect to wages, and the failure to tie those to productivity and work hours. We find this discrimination even in areas of equal activity, in particular the government sector and the sector of services, such as teaching, health and so forth: although immigrant workers receive relatively

high wages as compared with their wages in their original countries, and enjoy various higher services, that has an effect from the psychological standpoint on the productive capability of the immigrant worker (15).

Here one can make recourse to the conclusions reached by the study the Stanford Institute prepared on behalf of the Kuwait planning council in May 1974 regarding the salary structure and schedule in Kuwait. The negative repercussions on the productivity of immigrant workers were apparent through discrimination in wages. The study analyzed the relationship between wages and jobs and the results of wage increases in government agencies on the basis of nationality, and reached two basic conclusions (16):

1. Increases in wages did not lead to perceptible results relative to productivity.
2. Even if the levels of productivity were acceptable, the increase in wages could not lead to an improvement of productivity to the desired level, since raises in wages were applied to large numbers of workers without any consideration of their previous performance.

On the other hand, the disorganized character of the advent of immigrant Arab and Asian labor in the Arab Gulf countries has led to chaos in the labor market. Alongside Asian labor's threat to the identity, culture and composition of the population in these countries, there are the problems arising from the various inconsistent applications of laws and rules, which lead to psychologically tense relations among immigrants, especially Arabs. In the words of one observer, "In a country where incomes

are high and discrimination among workers is given permanent legitimacy, officially and organizationally, by law, schizophrenia is apparent in all areas" (17).

Some people have explained this schizophrenia as attributable to the nature of the society and the newness of its composition. On this subject, Ibrahim al-Ibrahim says "The Gulf is still at the stage of participant and unifier, and has not yet reached the stage of a society. All in all, it is more than a group of individuals who are equal in rights and duties. Social origin and tribal affiliation are still a criterion of status and honor" (18).

With respect to the comparison between the status of the organization of movement of Arab labor to the Gulf countries and the same with respect to Asian labor, we find a great difference which is to be considered in favor of the latter, especially Indian, Pakistani and South Korean workers, since the migration of these since 1979 has become more organized through agencies and giant companies which obtain major construction contracts for building projects and service industries and take charge on their own of the collective transfer of contingents of labor coming from their countries, where a single contingent can come to no less than 15,000 workers in a single project (19), in the form of collective contracts specifying workers' wages and bonuses and the percentage of income going to their governments, and to the country or agency moving them to the Gulf host countries.

This is matched by an absence of forms organizing the movement of Arab labor to the Gulf countries, in spite of the abovementioned Arab agreements, recommendations and organizations. That has been reflected in the form of intense competition and struggle between Arab and Asian labor. Asian labor receives wages less than Arab immigrant labor does, although it, especially the labor coming from South Korea, the Philippines and India, is distinguished by high technical skill and training in the use of modern technology. With the isolation of projects and the Asian workers in specific areas, this has led to a lack of participation by local manpower in the development and industrialization processes.

The picture now seems to be of the utmost sensitivity socially, culturally and politically, as a result of the relatively large proportions Asian labor has come to represent of the total population of the Gulf countries, especially the Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain and Oman. On top of that, statistics indicate that the Gulf countries will in the future need more Asian labor as a result of the Arab labor market's shortage of skilled labor and because of the relatively advanced pattern of technology in these countries in comparison with the Arab labor-exporting countries. Adding to the gravity of this, the rate of overall increase of incoming Asian labor was about 525.5 percent between 1965 and 1975, that is, it increased five

times in the course of 10 years. At the same time, we find that the percentage of Asian labor receiving labor permits exceeds the percentage of incoming Arab labor several times over.

Conclusion:

The movement of manpower in the Arab nation constitutes one of the most important focuses of common Arab action, in view of the importance of human resources for comprehensive development and economic integration among the Arab countries and the facilitation of laws, bills and measures on their movement from the exporting countries to the importing countries these resources require, as well as the provision of institutions and experts for training, raising working competence and raising the vocational level of the Arab worker as the most important element in comprehensive Arab development. On the other hand, the establishment of Arab agencies specializing in the reception and collection of the desired information and statistics on Arab labor, various aspects of their different fields of specialization and aspects of shortcomings in these areas of specialization possesses great importance.

In spite of the importance and the proliferation of writings by Arab experts and specialists on the movement of Arab labor, few of them have been concerned with the issues of regulating the exchange of people among Arab countries and facilitating that from the legal, procedural and legislative standpoints. One can say that the subject of the organizational and legal conditions of the movement of manpower among Arab countries truly represents the most important scientific and practical approach to the study of the general conditions of this movement from all aspects.

While international labor circles have given obvious attention to treatment of the conditions and forms of labor and the rights and duties of workers in the various countries of the world — as is apparent from the International Labor Organization's issuance of large groups of international agreements, recommendations and studies on these matters — and to the determination of workers' civil, political, economic and social rights, and they have to that end lectured the countries of the world that belong to the organization to confirm their commitment to these agreements and recommendations, and since the subject of the movement of labor between the importing and exporting countries in the Arab nation has represented one of the most important common Arab phenomena since the mid-seventies, due to the increase in the concentration on waves of Arab labor migrating to the Arab oil countries, especially the Cooperation Council countries, the study has concentrated on Agreement III issued by the International Labor Organization concerning discrimination in the area of employment and occupation and the prohibition of various forms of such discrimination within a given country or among the countries of the world, because of the importance of the assertion cited in the stipulations of the agreement on the

need for domestic authorities in the country to realize equality of opportunity and treatment in levels of employment and vocation to eliminate all discrimination. Therefore it was necessary to study the Cooperation Council countries' position on this international agreement, and the study has shown that just three countries, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, have signed it.

That has been an approach for learning about the position of domestic legislation issued in the Cooperation Council countries on the movement of Arab labor to them. Lest we speak prematurely and cast random charges about the provisions, there is obvious importance in studying the political, economic and social conditions in these countries which are so new to the experience of receiving and so new to this type of migration for the purpose of working that some of them have not prepared legislation and laws regulating work in the various employment sectors, governmental or private, and thus their legislation and laws regarding the regulation of work are to be considered a truthful product of their political, economic, social and other conditions. In this regard the regulation of the migration of Arab labor to them must take place without disruption of their legislation and laws, and at the same time harmony must be realized between the guarantee of policies and methods to facilitate the movement of Arab labor to them and their domestic legislation.

While international labor circles have been concerned with the foregoing, common Arab labor circles have not fallen behind in this in respect to issues of the movement of individuals with the goal of working among Arab countries, whether in general charters such as the Arab economic unity agreement issued in 1957 or in agreements bearing on the facilitation of the movement of labor among Arab countries and attention to training and raising work competence. The study regarding this has taken note of Arab Agreement Two and amended Agreement Four for 1967 and 1975 respectively on the movement of manpower, Agreement Nine for 1977 and Recommendation Two for the same year. These agreements have been concerned with the facilitation of the movement of labor among Arab countries, the realization of equality in work opportunities between domestic and immigrant workers and the grant of priority to Arab workers over foreign workers. From the study it has been apparent that few Arab countries have agreed to join these agreements, while the Cooperation Council countries, which are the ones basically concerned with the migration of Arab labor to them, have not joined them.

On the other hand, common Arab labor circles have been concerned with the issues of vocational guidance and training and Arab cooperation in mutual training, alongside the collection of the necessary information for increasing the competence of training on the Arab level and covering various aspects of the deficit in areas of specialization which are in keeping with new requirements in light of the entry of new technical and technological methods since the mid-seventies, so that it will be

possible to dispense with foreign workers. This can be evident in the establishment of Arab employment and training organizations, such as the Arab labor office and the Arab employment organization, in the framework of the Arab labor organization.

Upon application to the Cooperation Council countries, it was apparent from the study that the movement of Arab labor migrating to these countries was dominated by an individual, disorganized character lacking adequate coordination between importing and host countries. The past years have witnessed the signing of bilateral agreements between certain Arab countries to facilitate the migration of labor. Here is where there is an obvious need for commitment to agreements and recommendations which will facilitate the movement of the abovementioned Arab labor and for coordination among the efforts of Arab governments to guarantee the best treatment of incoming Arab workers, and also support for Arab labor organizations in the area of the collection and circulation of information and mutual training to confront the encroachment of Asian labor.

Footnotes:

1. Dr Badriyah 'Abdallah al-'Awadi, Countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council and International Labor Circles (Kuwait, World of Knowledge Series, National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature, January 1985), pp 118-120.
2. Op. cit., p 122.
3. Op. cit., pp 124-125.
4. Op. cit., pp 131-132.
5. Dr Nadir Farjani, Facilitating the Exchange of People among Arab Countries, AL-MUSTAQBAL AL-'ARABI (Beirut, Center for Arab Unity Studies), Year Five, No 39, May 1982, p 40.
6. Op. cit., p 41.
- 7, 8, 9. Op. cit., pp 42-44.
10. Arab labor organization, Arab employment organization, Documents of the Transitional Stage (Baghdad, Arab Organization, 1981), quoting from Dr Nadir Farjani, op. cit., pp 45-6.
- 11, 12, 13. Op. cit., p 47.
14. Dr Muhammad al-Rumayhi, A Gulf View of the Social and Political Effects of Immigrant Labor, AL-MUSTAQBAL AL-'ARABI, Year Three, Number 23, January 1981, p 71.
15. Op. cit., p 73.

16. Dr Raja'i Abu Khadra, Labor and Productivity in the Arab Gulf Region, AL-MUSTAQBAL AL-'ARABI, Year Two, Number Seven, January 1979, pp 155-156.

17. Quoted from Dr Muhammad al-Rumayhi, op. cit., p 71.

18. Ibrahim al-Ibrahim, Arab Migrants and Social and Political Development in the Gulf Countries, QADAYA 'ARABI-YAH, Year Seven, Number Five, May 1979, p 280.

19. Dr Henri 'Azzam, Conclusions and Likely Developments in the Movement of the Workforce in the Importing Countries and the Exporting Countries, AL-MUSTAQBAL AL-'ARABI, Year Three, Number 23, January 1979, p 24.

20. Dr 'Abd-al-Basit 'Abd-al-Mu'ti, Regarding the Social Cost of Asian Labor in the Gulf, AL-MUSTAQBAL AL-'ARABI, Year Four, Number 37, March 1982, pp 41-42.

11887

IRAQ

Contractors Concerned About Funds Going to Foreign Companies

45000026 Cairo AKHIR SA'AH in Arabic
10 Feb 88 p 58

[Article by Amir Al-Zahhar]

[Text] The fifth conference of the Federation of Arab Contracting Companies was held a few days ago in Cairo. Prime Minister 'Atif Sidqi opened the conference, which was attended by 13 Arab nations. Unexpectedly, baffling facts and figures emerged, showing that, during the 17 years from 1963 to 1980, the amount of funds spent on development and construction activity was more than \$600 billion. The Arab contracting companies' share was only \$150 billion, while \$450 billion went entirely to foreign companies. It is worth mentioning that this sum, allocated for construction, represents about 45 percent of the total funds allocated for development during this period.

European and American companies obtained the lion's share—62 percent—of these projects. The number of European companies which did jobs in the Arab nations was 115. The United States followed with 46 companies, then Japan, Korea and other nations.

The study that released these dire figures to the conference prompts a minor question, which is: What if this enormous amount of funds had gone to Arab companies only, and what if these funds had circulated or been reused within the Arab economy?

Egyptian engineer Sharif Hafiz, a member of the executive office of the Federation of Arab Contractors, said that the most important ideas and recommendations are the following: First, it is possible to form blocs among the contracting companies, and the beginning should be in integral geographical regions, such as the Gulf region, the Arab Maghrib and others. Through these blocs and cooperation among the companies, competition with any other international companies is possible. It is certain that the Arab governments will give priority to these companies, especially out of a desire to increase their modern capabilities.

Second, [it is possible to] operate a system to induce and encourage Arab companies to enter fields in which foreign companies stand alone, such as airport, railroad and dam building projects.

As for the reason that foreign companies have won large construction jobs in the Arab world, the study said that the wealthy creditor nations condition their loans to some of the Arab nations on their companies carrying out those jobs and projects. Likewise, foreign consulting firms, especially those known internationally, take an important controlling role in these projects. One of the stranger cases involving a consulting firm happened during the drainage problem in Alexandria, when it became clear that one of the firms had requested tens of millions of dollars to study whether drainage into the sea or the land was better! This is the case not only in Egypt, but in other Arab nations as well.

There are other suggestions as to establishing Arab consulting firms, especially since there is still much untapped expertise in some Arab nations, such as Egypt. On the other hand, the contracting companies are also forming a bloc among themselves and are establishing consulting firms. In a similar role to that played by foreign nations in imposing conditions to support awarding projects to their companies, the Arab governments and development funds which offer loans to other nations should impose conditions in order to support awarding projects to Arab companies.

Returning to the language of figures, the study says that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is at the head of Arab nations that make use of foreign companies, with 98, followed by Egypt with 84, then Iraq with 75.

JORDAN

Minister Discusses Press Censorship, Economic Plans

4404040101 London AL-TADAMUN in Arabic
30 Jan 88 pp 17-19

[Interview with Hani al-Khasawinah, the New Jordanian Minister of Information, by Khalid Muhadin in Amman]

[Excerpts] Question: In your new position, you are facing a difficult mission represented by the misunderstanding between the local and Arab press on the one hand and

the government on the other. This situation has led to the prohibition of a number of Jordanian journalists from writing under their own names, and an intensification of the censorship of the Arab press during recent years. Is there anything you would like to say or do with regard to eliminating this misunderstanding?

Answer: Certainly. King Husayn and Prime Minister Zayd al-Rifa'i have accorded journalists, especially political commentators, the esteem, respect and appreciation of the Jordanian administration. When differences of opinion, or differences between their analyses of issues occur, this leads to their being prohibited from writing. This does not mean a lessening of their status and esteem.

We in Jordan have a special characteristic which embraces journalists and non-journalists—regardless of differences or misunderstandings, a spirit of being one family prevails among us. Journalists who do not currently write under their own names are part of this single family. It must be recognized that for this spirit, the spirit of tolerance, we are indebted to the way King Husayn has administered the government for the past 35 years. All doors are open to these journalists concerning dialogue with officials on the subject of censorship: King Husayn's door, the Prime Minister's door, and my own door. We are all concerned with the press issue. Editors-in-chief are concerned about this issue and it the responsibility of press to build public opinion so that it understands the circumstances under which the country's leadership operates.

I affirm that the problem of the journalists who are prohibited from writing under their own names will soon be solved in the spirit of responsibility which unites us as one group regardless of position and responsibility.

Question: The Press and Publication Law currently in effect permits the government to close, or confiscate the permit of any newspaper without allowing it the opportunity to resort to legal recourse to appeal such decisions. Also, some are of the opinion that the transformation of the daily newspapers from being privately owned to being public share companies could make the newspapers vulnerable to pressure. Can Jordanian newspapers function with absolute freedom under these laws, and can journalists carry out their duties in accordance with the powers granted them by the constitution? Is there an intention to change the Press and Publication Law?

Answer: Despite the implication of this question, I would like to mention that there is the law, and there is the general spirit of the law. The general spirit in our country goes beyond many legal stipulations. Despite the fact that these are stipulations which permit the government to close a newspaper or rescind its permit, the forced closure of a newspaper has not occurred in previous years under any Jordanian government. Our newspapers are a source of pride for us. Even with regard to their monetary profits they are successful institutions.

The spirit rather than the letter of the law prevails more in press-government relations, in addition to the spirit of dialogue and reprimand, brotherly links, and a spirit of mutual respect. This spirit goes several levels beyond old legal stipulations.

I hope that I can contribute to our jurisprudential legislation. During recent years, we, more than anyone, have promulgated legislation necessarily and unnecessarily. I hope that we can confront the greatest challenge facing Jordan, and indeed the Arab world. This is the challenge of the modernization of the administration. I hope that we can tackle the question within the framework of a comprehensive process of completely assessing our situation.

Question: Is there any intention to amend the law?

Answer: Regarding that which pertains to me, and in consideration of the fact that my ministry is the concerned party, I have not thought about the matter until now. However, the legal committee in the parliament has found that there is draft legislation to amend the Press and Publication Law in effect, which was proposed ten years ago in 1978. This legislation must first of all be discussed.

Question: In your new position, what can you provide in the light of what was stated concerning the existence of a crisis of trust between the press and journalists on one hand, and the government on the other?

Answer: I will try to be responsible and trustworthy, and to have good will toward others. I am not one who changes [his views] depending on the position he holds, and I will not be a pawn in a chess game. Because of my pride in my country and the course pursued by my country, this spirit will be reflected in my work. I am certain that those working in the Jordanian press and the information media are of a special character, and that your experience is outstanding. I will try to benefit from it to the greatest extent possible.

Question: Is there an orientation toward eliminating the crisis of trust which exists between the press and the government?

Answer: As a matter of fact, there is no crisis of trust. There are what I might call difficulties. Journalists have difficulties because some of our journalists, who write in Arab magazines and newspapers, experience difficulties resulting from a certain degree of independent judgement which might be caused by a paucity of dialogue and discussion among themselves, and with officials. We must strive to eliminate these difficulties from a unified position in consideration of the fact that we are one group.

Question: Much has been said about the broad reorganization undertaken by Zayd al-Rifa'i in his government. What is the official explanation of this reorganization?

Answer: I do not have an explanation. Rather, I have an assessment. I personally am of the opinion that there are several dangerous, negative factors which contradict our great Islamic religion and the values of our Arab nation. These negative factors have subsided in recent years in Jordan, and are represented by a lack of slowness, and the speed by which rumors against one another or against those shouldering responsibility are exchanged. For this reason, the concept of the everlasting law, which states that one is innocent until proven guilty, must be firmly entrenched.

In Jordan, changes sometimes occur for no reason, and sometimes because of personal reasons. I was an ambassador in Paris and worked in the entourage of King Husayn in the Royal Court in numerous periods. I entered the government as a minister for a five-month period, and then left the government. I have no explanation, nor do others. In the final analysis, my brothers who left the government shouldered responsibility just as their equals did. A number of those ministers—as I have heard—asked the Prime Minister and King Husayn to be relieved of their ministerial responsibilities. I personally did not learn of my appointment as a minister until three hours prior to the appointment. The brothers who left the government have a responsibility, and responsibility in our country is a difficult burden which subjects its bearer to many hardships, and sometimes to unjust accusations. It suffices for these brothers that they received high praise from King Husayn when they left. This is the explanation. If there is a more comprehensive explanation, I am not aware of it.

Question: In view of the announcement by the current government, because of which it obtained the confidence of the parliament, and in view of announcements and statements by officials regarding the economic concerns which the government intends to confront and solve, the government of Zayd al-Rifa'i has been described as a government of economic tasks. What plans are proposed in the economic sphere. Also, what is the significance of the departure from the cabinet of the Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply, who is directly responsible for confronting and dealing with these concerns and tasks?

Answer: First of all, I would like to indicate that prior to entering the government, I was troubled by our economic conditions. My concerns are those of any Jordanian in the general working sphere. We had experienced a true, comprehensive, economic revival, and had completed our infrastructure. We developed large programs, and it was inevitable that errors occur—errors resulting from life's restrictions, and not intentional errors. When the oil upswing receded, and aid was reduced, this situation was inherited—a difficult economic situation—not by the present government, but the previous

government and the government before it, at the beginning of the situation. Jordan's current strategic policy aims to consolidate our economic conditions in accordance with our resources, preserve the country's hard currency reserves, secure the stability of the Jordanian dinar, and encourage economic activity. Based on my participation in my first cabinet meetings, I am satisfied with the measures which the cabinet took and is taking.

Regarding the departure of the Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply, I believe that he is a man whose behavior is basically governed—within and outside the ministry—by his concern for the country and the welfare of its national economy. He is therefore competent.

13286

Officials Discuss Potassium Production, Future Projects

44040092 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic
17 Jan 88 p 9

[Article by Husam al-'Atum]

[Excerpts] Despite its young age, the potassium industry in Jordan, represented by a jointly-held Arab corporation, is highly competitive in world markets. That industry is today of the highest quality and one of the strongest in the world.

AL-DUSTUR toured the Arab Potash Company's facilities at Ghawr al-Safi and al-'Aqabah and interviewed a number of its engineers as well as its general manager 'Ali al-Nusur.

Engineer 'Ali al-Nusur, the company's general manager, says that the Jordanian potassium industry is highly regarded internationally because of its strong competitive position. It extracts directly from the Dead Sea which is the world's most saline natural lake. It also has the advantages of high technological standards and of proximity to the port of 'Aqabah.

The Arab Potash Company was founded in 1956, jointly with some Arab countries, to process the Dead Sea's salts and especially potassium chloride. The company was reactivated in 1975 after a period of stagnation and became operational in 1982 at a cost of more than \$480 million. The facility was financed by Arab and foreign development funds and built by specialized multinationals. Certain Arab countries shared in the company's capital of 72.45 million Jordanian dinars. The Jordanian government is the largest shareholder with 72.4 million dinars or 53 percent of the capital. The company was additionally financed by loans from Arab and international investment institutions.

The potassium industry utilizes two of the most abundant natural resources in Jordan—solar energy and mineral-rich Dead Sea water. A location most appropriate for that purpose was found in the southern Dead Sea

where vast acreage of flat lands enjoy a higher evaporation rate due to hotter and drier weather than in the north. Deep concentrations of saline were also found to the north of al-San region which would provide limitless supplies of the raw material.

The Dead Sea water contains 1.2% of dissolved potassium chloride. Refining and solar operations transform that to potassium chloride farm fertilizer which is 97.5 percent pure. This is accomplished by first using solar flats to produce the raw material—a carnallite solution with 23 percent concentration of potassium chloride which the refineries later extract into potassium fertilizer.

The company utilizes solar flats to concentrate the solution by allowing the water to evaporate and the salts to settle to the bottom. Eight such flats, separated by mud dams, have already been built on an area larger than 100 square kilometers.

Engineer al-Nusur says the company uses four machines to constantly harvest carnallite underwater in the flats. The fourth harvester is computer-driven and therefore more developed and productive than the others.

Engineer al-Nusur also said that local workers now comprise 93.8 percent of the total work force as the company continues to replace foreign manpower with local workers. Fifty five foreign employees were replaced in 1987 and only 87 foreigners remain in the company compared to 200 by the end of 1984. Three foreign experts of the original 31.52 percent of the company's workers are natives of al-Aghwar (depressions) and al-Karak regions.

Engineer 'Ismat al-Shirkasi, director of the Potash office in al-'Aqabah, says the company employs a fleet of 50-ton trucks, which average two trips daily, to transport the product from the plant at Ghawr al-Safi to its 'Aqabah warehouse which has a capacity of 60,000 tons. The company owned 33 such trucks in 1986. The company added 10 trucks to its fleet in 1987 and plans to add 10 more in 1988 for a total of 53 trucks. A local contractor was hired to transport part of the product in 1985 and 1986 but company trucks were able to handle the entire production in 1987.

He added that the company also owns modern warehouses at the port of 'Aqabah with two flexible loading platforms each with a capacity of 500 tons an hour. The dock has a maximum loading capacity of 2,000 tons per hour. The two 'Aqabah warehouses have a maximum storage capacity of 160,000 tons of potassium chloride in any of its three varieties.

Company warehouses were completed and the first ship was loaded during the first half of 1983. Nineteen ships were loaded that year, 38 ships in 1984, 74 in 1985, 97 in

1986, and 91 ships by the end of 1987. This means that some 319 ships were loaded and some 3.9 million tons of potassium chloride were exported over the past five years.

Engineer al-Shirkasi added that the 'Aqabah warehouses, at their present storage and operational capacities, can handle the increase in production to 1.4 million tons projected for 1989. Studies are currently underway to add a second loading dock and increase storage capacity to meet the anticipated increase in the production and export of potassium chloride to 1.7 million tons annually by 1991/92.

Engineer al-Shirkasi said the Arab Potash Company is currently considering "cold crystallization" technology to increase potassium chloride production from 1.8 to 2 million tons annually. This technology is energy efficient and therefore low in cost.

A contract was signed on 3 June 1987 with a British company to build an experimental facility at the project site which would have a production capacity of 1.5 tons per hour. The facility should be completed in the third quarter of 1988 and will be operated for a full year in order to gather sufficient data. If it proved feasible, the technology will then be applied commercially for the production of some 1.7 million tons annually by 1991/92 increasing to 2 million tons by the mid 90's.

The company has plans to extract Dead Sea salts and utilize potassium chloride by-products for important economic projects such as:

- Potassium Sulfides. The increasing world demand for chloride-free potash fertilizers has induced the Arab Potash Company to study the feasibility of a potassium sulfide industry.

- Sodium carbonates (soda-ash). A feasibility study was made in 1981/82 for uses for sodium chloride which is produced in huge quantities as a by-product of the potassium industry. Annual projected production is 250,000 tons.

- Compound fertilizers. A French company made a study of that project in 1985.

- Bromine and derivatives. A feasibility study was conducted by a French firm.

- Magnesium oxides. An Austrian firm did a preliminary study in 1979. Magnesium chloride, present in high concentrations in Dead Sea water, will be used to produce 65,000 tons of magnesium oxide annually.

The Arab Potash Company, in view of strong local demand and current prices, is thinking of updating feasibility studies of some of the above projects, especially sodium carbonates and potassium sulfides.

Official Discusses Water Projects, Agricultural Plans

44040104 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic
23 Jan 88 p 18

[Interview with Dr Muhammad Bani Hani, head of the Jordan Valley Authority, by Ahmad Shakir: "Continued Spending and its Volume Depend on Availability of Water Resources and Government Decisions"]

[Text] The Jordan Valley Authority is one of the establishments which have been given the task of settling and developing the valley which has come to supply all of Jordan's needs with respect to fruits, vegetables, and agricultural crops.

The amount which has been invested and spent in the valley has so far been about 260 million dinars.

Tens of millions of dinars will be spent on irrigation projects, building dams, and expanding the main canals in the valley. AL-DUSTUR talked with Dr Muhammad Bani Hani, head of the Jordan Valley Authority, about the various issues relating to the valley—its projects, its future, and the relationship between the farmers and the Authority.

[Question] How are the new farmers' selection committees in the valleys coming along?

[Answer] The five new farmers' selection committees began working in the Jordan Valley on Nov 28 1987, and they meet regularly every week on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays. As for the committees of the southern valleys, of which there are four, they began work on Dec 27 1987, and they meet weekly on Sundays and Tuesdays.

The committees all work according to set principles which protect the citizen and the state in accordance with the law on developing the Jordan Valley. We urge our fellow citizens to cooperate with these committees so that they may work on their behalf as required and accomplish their work at the proper time.

[Question] It is said that the amount invested and spent on the Jordan Valley has so far reached about 260 million dinars. Have you any idea how long spending on the valley will go on, and when the integrated development program will be completed?

[Answer] The continuation of spending, and its volume, depends on the availability of water resources and government decisions on the development and exploitation of these resources. The building of dams to store surplus water in the winter for use in the summer is a goal that can only be postponed but not done away with. In addition, the use of available waters calls for the establishment of projects that need monetary allocations, and

that must be accompanied by the establishment of an infrastructure, which has not yet been completed in the southern valleys and which is still in the beginning stages in Wadi 'Arabah.

I believe that the next 10 years at the most will be enough to complete the integrated development program in the Jordan Valley, the southern valleys, and Wadi 'Arabah.

[Question] Will the powers that were taken away from some ministries and municipalities be returned to their holders after the infrastructure projects in the valleys are completed?

[Answer] All facilities that were built by the Authority, such as schools, hospitals, social service centers, marketing centers, and tomato paste processing plants, have been turned over to the concerned authorities.

The Authority, in cooperation and coordination with the Ministry of Municipal, Rural and Environmental Affairs, the heads of town and village councils, and the administrative governors, is currently studying the completion of laying down plans for developing towns and villages, approving them, then submitting them to the heads of these councils so that they may do their part in accordance with established laws and regulations.

The Authority will continue to be responsible for the administration, operation, and maintenance of the dams and irrigation projects, and we hope that the farmers will share in the maintenance and care of the irrigation networks, and the responsible use of irrigation water to reduce what goes to waste. We hope that some day we will reach the point where the farmers will be able to take part in the operation of these networks, and that in the future we will be able to turn the branch networks in their entirety over to the farmers for them to operate and maintain through committees and offices that will be formed for that purpose.

[Question] Is there thought of concentrating on exploiting the land and other resources and of increasing expenditures in the southern valleys and Wadi 'Arabah to correspond to the amount spent in the northern valleys?

[Answer] As I mentioned before, the volume of spending depends on how much water there is and on the government's decisions regarding its exploitation for crop irrigation. So far the government has spent more than 20 million dinars on developing the southern valley region by setting up the first phase of the irrigation project for the southern valleys and some other service projects.

Then there is the government decree that use of the water of al-Mawjib take into consideration what is needed for part of the drinking water and for the potash and chemical plants, after which the Authority would be able to use the rest of this water for irrigating some of the

lands of the southern valleys, this in addition to the possibility of building dams along the upper reaches of al-Mawjib and another dam in Wadi al-Hasa.

As for Wadi 'Arabah, there are four small exploratory projects, and the Authority is extending the regions of underground water. The focus will be on developing Wadi 'Arabah this year and in future years, but the degree of expansion will depend on the amount of underground water that can be exploited for the benefit of the people in that region.

[Question] The farmers suffer from weak marketing of crops. What is the Authority's role in that?

[Answer] The Authority is cooperating with the official parties concerned with marketing, and it is giving priority to instructions related to this matter. What the Authority is doing now is limited to helping the Ministry of Agriculture to apply the agricultural policy which is based on determining the areas of some vegetable crops, this in addition to taking part in marketing studies. The Authority will continue to offer or take part in any effort that might help to reduce the seriousness of this problem.

[Question] What is the water situation in the valleys?

[Answer] Water in the valleys, and especially the surface waters, varies from one year to the next according to the rainy season.

Good, abundant rains reduce the need for irrigation, especially if they fall between October and November on into April. That enables the irrigation of citrus and other trees to be totally halted throughout this period, which helps to create a surplus of surface water, part of which can be stored in the Wadi al-'Arab dam, and the other part can be used for irrigating the land south of the Zarqa' River, which receives little rain, in addition to watering the crops grown under plastic greenhouses. Moreover, a season of good rain accompanied by surplus water that can be stored in the dam lakes along the length of the Jordan Valley helps to provide water needed for the crops during the critical irrigation months and the summer, and that helps to reduce the efforts by the Authority to ration irrigation water and what accompanies it by way of reduced yields or delay in winter planting.

As for the rains that have fallen so far, they portend a good crop season. They have greatly reduced the need for irrigation in the Jordan Valley, and the winter season has just begun.

[Question] What is the role of the Authority in stopping the fragmentation of agricultural holdings in the valley, and is it continuing to divide the land in its new projects into agricultural units such that they do not exceed 30 dunums? Does this area have economic viability, agriculturally speaking?

[Answer] The irrigation projects in the Jordan Valley, which began in the early sixties, and the legal stipulations that an area of an agricultural unit cannot be less than 30 dunums which cannot be divided, were in themselves a measure to prevent the fragmentation of holdings, in comparison with other agricultural regions in the kingdom. It will be decreed that the Authority turn to large areas if it is determined that large areas are economically more feasible and more appropriate for the production of certain essential crops. It will make a study of that, in cooperation with the concerned authorities, on the state lands in the project to extend the King 'Abdullah canal by 14.5 km.

[Question] What steps have been taken so far on the al-Wihdah Dam, and when will work begin?

[Answer] The consultative company, Harza Engineering, began to prepare the necessary studies in accordance with the agreement that was signed with it on Nov 19, 1987.

In addition, studies on economic feasibility and water balance will be completed by next March, while all designs, plans, and tender documents will be ready in September of next year. In addition, the Authority has during the past week announced the training of companies to build the tunnel feeding the dam. That is expected to begin in April 1987 [as published] so that work on this tunnel will end as soon the building of the body of the dam and other installations is begun in order to save time needed for building the dam.

After this project is completed, there will be better control of irrigation water to be consistent with the monthly water requirements of the crops in the Jordan Valley. In addition, some of the flood waters from the Yarmuk River basin will be stored, which will help to increase the amount of water from this basin allocated to irrigated agriculture and other uses.

[Question] What are the most important things that have been accomplished during the past year?

[Answer] The signing of the agreement to build the al-Wahdah dam with our sister state Syria on Sept 9 1987 crowned the government's achievements in the water sector.

That was achieved due to the directives of his majesty our exalted king and of his excellency President Hafiz al-Asad and to the efforts of his excellency the prime minister Mr Zayid al-Rifa'i as well as their excellencies the two prime ministers of Syria, Prof Mahmud al-Zu'bi and Dr 'Abd-al-Ra'uf al-Kasam. Immediately following the signing of this agreement, the Authority began to make the necessary studies.

As for the Authority's most important achievements during 1987, they are the completion of the King Talal Dam, the completion of the studies on the al-Karamah

Dam, and the initiation of studies needed for building dams on the al-Yabis, Kafarnajjah, Rajib, and al-Zarqa' valleys, as well as erecting the al-Kafarayn Dam.

In addition, the King 'Abdallah canal has been linked up to its final stages, so that its length between al-Yarmuk in the north and the Dead Sea in the south is now 110.5 km.

In addition, work was begun on the irrigation project of the middle valleys to convert the irrigation network of open canals over an area of 60,000 dunums into a network of pipes through which the water would flow under pressure, and also to build a second Zarqa' aqueduct to bring water from the King Talal Dam in the north to cover the deficit in irrigation water in basins 22 and 23 in the King 'Abdallah canal project north of the Zarqa' River.

Many infrastructure projects have been carried out, such as the al-Subayhi-al-Zayfan road, a health clinic in Wadi 'Arabah, and some of the buildings needed by the administrations of the irrigation districts in the Jordan Valley.

[Question] What are your projects for this year and the next?

[Answer] Embarking on the building of the al-Wihdah dam has priority over other projects. It is expected that the Authority will begin the project of converting the irrigation in the north, which will be similar to the irrigation project of the middle valleys.

That will be in addition to setting up a number of small projects in the al-Makhaybah district and the districts around the Wadi 'Arab Dam.

If allocations and funding are made available, the Authority will start to build the side dams along the al-Yabis, Kafarnajjah, Rajib, and al-Zarqa' valleys, and to erect the Kafarayn Dam.

As for what concerns the waters of al-Mawjib and the dams there, that will depend on a government decision on the distribution of those waters for domestic, industrial, and irrigation purposes, and it is hoped that it will be made this year.

The Wadi 'Arabah district will have priority in matters relating to the development of water sources and service projects because of the people's urgent need there and because of supreme directives and the great concern for them in that district.

[Question] What steps have you taken to end centralization in the Authority's agencies?

[Answer] The Authority is currently working in cooperation with the administration institute to set up an organizational framework and job descriptions that are compatible with modern administration and with the civil service organization.

In addition, reducing centralization and setting up a modern system for files, land deeds, and projects are among the most important things with which the Authority is concerned, and which it hopes to achieve through this program.

Reducing the staff in Amman to the bare essentials is one of the most important goals of the Authority, since the nature of its projects requires that most of its technical and administrative cadres be present along the valleys according to the location and nature of those projects. In fact, this reduction has already resulted in having a technical and administrative staff in the Amman offices of not more than 12 percent of the Authority's total staff.

[Question] How is coordination between the Authority and the ministries, official departments, and public establishments coming along?

[Answer] The work of the Authority requires that it have direct contacts with all the ministries and establishments that have some connection to the Jordan Valley.

Coordination between the Authority and these offices is one of the priorities of the Authority's present administration, and a large number of the ministries and concerned departments are represented on the Authority's board of directors. And there is constant coordination between the Jordan Valley Authority and the Water Authority in all matters which call for consultation. This would result in the achievement of desired goals in the water sector.

[Question] How would you evaluate the Authority's relationship with the press and the media, and the role of the press in playing an effective role in the implementation of the Authority's programs?

[Answer] The press and the media are among the important institutions which the Authority needs to play a role with it in the implementation of development programs, for through them it is possible to convey a picture to the citizens about the activities of this establishment and its projects, and they can also convey the views of the citizen on these programs to those responsible, which helps to improve implementation and work procedures.

We are completely ready to cooperate with the press and the media, and all work centers will be ready to receive them, as long as that does not conflict with our work time and is done according to appropriate, prior arrangements. I would urge our colleagues in these organizations to write correct information from reliable sources, and in

doing so to follow responsible methods which strive to bring out the truth and to analyze it in a way that is consistent with the welfare of the nation and its citizens.

12547

LEBANON

Minister Discusses Economic Situation, Supply Shortages

44040102 London AL-HAWADITH in Arabic
29 Jan 88 pp 45-46

[Interview with Lebanese Minister of Economy Victor Qasir by William al-Dhahir: "The Finance Minister's Position is Puzzling me!"; date and place not given]

[Text] The current situation in Lebanon is characterized by shortages. There are fuel, bread, electricity, and water shortages that let up for a few days or weeks then suddenly become so acute that the Lebanese finds himself standing in long lines at bakeries begging to trade his money for a loaf of bread to satisfy his children's hunger. Gasoline is available at times and unavailable at others. Gas station owners control the citizens' means of transportation. There is a chronic shortage of electricity. Children's eyes are deprived of light and the country is threatened with permanent darkness accompanied by water shortages and disruption of all public utilities. The reasons are explained in the following candid interview with the minister of economy, industry, and oil.

[Question] The country is headed for a fuel crisis. Darkness will engulf all of Lebanon unless the necessary funds are allocated. Who do you think is responsible for this catastrophe and how do we avoid it?

[Answer] At present, and for the next one and a half months, I can assure you that we have enough fuel and that there is no fear of shortage. I, personally, have learned a lot of unforgettable lessons from past experiences when I was blamed and accused of failing to do my job. Today, I am giving finance authorities ample warning that the country will be short of fuel as of a certain specific date. Originally, there was a supply program which should have been guaranteed for at least a year. I presented such a program to the Ministry of Finance and the Central Bank and asked for their guarantees. The last time I did so they only provided credit for 2 months saying that "God will then provide!" But this is not satisfactory because...

[Question] Who said that?

[Answer] We were meeting at premier al-Husayni's place. The Minister of Finance and the governor of the Central Bank were there. The problem seems to be that they don't fully appreciate my warning when I say that we have fuel for only one and a half months or for two months at the outside.

[Question] May we know who "they" are? Who are these people who don't appreciate the situation and won't provide the necessary credit—the Finance Ministry or the Central Bank?

[Answer] The basic issue is that we have to guarantee the supply, but how? First we must call a tender then open credit and allow the tenderer time for procurement, shipping, and unloading. This takes a long time—two months at least. It is the practice to request allocations from the Ministry of Finance which in turn refers them to the Central Bank. A delay in approving the needed credit will necessarily delay the procurement of fuel which, in turn, would cause shortages similar to those we suffered in the past. I personally would like to forestall the crisis and assure the supply two months before it is needed in order to avoid shortages, but I still do not know whether the fuel supply will be assured or not. For instance, we offered a tender for a gas supply whose allocations are already guaranteed by the Central Bank. But the bank is yet to inform me if it has approved the transaction. All I was told is that the central bank wants to extend a treasury loan to fuel and gas pending approval by the Chamber of Deputies since fuel is state subsidized and is supplied to the electric company. Fuel needed by the electric company is valued at 80 million liras annually for which the company does not reimburse the state. This means that the price of fuel is debited to our account and we shall remain in debt as long as we supply the electric company with "free" fuel.

The same goes for gas which is highly subsidized. We buy 10 kilos of gas for 1,000 liras and deliver them for only 100 or 110 liras. The Central Bank therefore wants a treasury loan to cover the costs of these two products. Moreover, credit must be opened to assure the Tripoli refinery of its crude supply. There is also the matter of 150 to 200 million liras in monthly salaries for employees of Tripoli and al-Zahrani refineries. We sent that allocation to the Ministry of Finance which referred it to the Central Bank which returned it to me with the notation that "the central committee of the Bank of Lebanon has irrevocably resolved not to open hard currency credit for fuel." I had to do something because that phrase meant that the Central Bank refuses from this point on to open any credit for gasoline or any other fuel. I prepared a report and submitted it to all pertinent authorities such as the presidency, the prime ministry, the finance ministry, and also the Ministry of Water and Electrical Resources since Nabih Birri is the minister in charge of the electrical authority in Lebanon. I informed them all that two or three fuel tankers would be arriving shortly and that after that I could no longer guarantee the supply of fuel since the Central Bank is asking me for a treasury loan to be approved by the Chamber of Deputies. The Chamber is not currently in session and no extraordinary session is planned. Even if it convened, it might not approve the loan and I can not wait till the last moment or until the country plunges into darkness in the throes of a severe fuel shortage. We would have wasted time even if they approved the credit two months from

now because we would have to wait another couple of months for the goods to arrive. This is what is happening in fact and has been my major concern for almost two weeks. I am still waiting for a reply.

[Question] Does this mean that the Bank of Lebanon still adheres to its position?

[Answer] The papers carry many statements on the topic. One time they claim they are willing to issue the loan. Another time they say they loaned us \$50 million. At any rate, I am only bound by official documents in writing.

[Question] You mean the matter is being handled through press releases and that you still have not received documents pertaining to new official action on the allocations?

[Answer] I have not yet received any official communication on the matter even though I had asked the Ministry of Finance to respond within ten days.

[Question] Where does the finance minister stand on the allocations?

[Answer] I am really puzzled by his position. I no longer know where he stands. One day he is amenable to approving the allocations and another day he is not. You must ask him where he really stands!

[Question] In short, you are telling us that because of confrontational attitudes by the officials concerned the country is approaching a period of darkness and fuel shortages that may be long-term and threaten to paralyze the country?

[Answer] Of course, unless the funds are appropriated. If they don't supply me with finances I won't be able to provide financing. This is what we are coming to. I have done my duty and it remains that other officials also do their duty, not towards me of course but towards the people.

[Question] Mr Minister, we suffer crisis after crisis and humiliation after humiliation. We have a bread shortage every now and then. People humbly queue up in front of bakeries. Who is responsible for this bread shortage. As a minister, how do you view a floating price for bread as advocated by bakers?

[Answer] You know that we buy wheat at between 50,000 and 60,000 liras a ton then distribute it for 400 liras. This means we are really giving it away at a nominal price. Wheat, because of its very low price, is being used as poultry feed and smuggled to neighboring markets. Even bread is being smuggled abroad. Roads to Cyprus, Europe, and other destinations are open. It is a bottomless pit. We have a program to supply some

390,000 tons of wheat annually, which is adequate for consumer needs. Even 300,000 tons per year would meet consumer demands were it not for waste, smuggling, and black markets.

Even then, bakers complain of shortages and ask for increased supplies claiming that their flour allotments do not meet market needs. I am sure that even 800,000 tons would not satisfy them because there is no way to control smuggling and waste. That is what causes the bread shortage. Moreover, bakers claim shortages every once in a while in order to raise prices. They ask for allotment increases on the pretext that people are now consuming more bread because of the cost of living. We are reaching the point where we may be forced to adjust the price list weekly especially that the dollar now averages between 400 and 650 liras. That was why I asked bakery owners to set their own prices under my supervision. They priced a bundle of bread at 65 liras and raised it to 75 liras when the dollar increased to 600 liras. I kept close watch on their prices until they asked recently for another increase to 85 liras. At that point, I suspended their pricing and set an official price of 75 liras per bundle of bread. I don't understand why they want to increase bread prices when wheat is subsidized and supplied to them almost for free. I assure you that officials and the government have an understanding to maintain the flour subsidy despite the huge losses sustained by the state as a result. Bakers claim that their costs have risen because the packaging for 2-kilo bundles, which used to cost half a lira or one lira has increased in price from seven to eight to 13 liras. They also claim cost increases for yeast, sugar, and salt as well as wages. We therefore promised to study their demands thoroughly and objectively. I was then told that public authorities intend to look into the matter and I am waiting to find out the outcome of their study. Despite official pricing, bread is sold at different prices in different regions. It is cheaper in regions under army control. There is no reason for the shortages because we supply the bakeries with more than market needs. Increasing those supplies will only mean added waste.

[Question] It is said that the U.S. Congress has diverted wheat aid from Lebanon to other countries upon learning that bread is being smuggled out of Lebanon. What measures are you taking to combat smuggling? Did smuggling really cause Congress to stop wheat aid to Lebanon at the last moment?

[Answer] This is the story of U.S. wheat aid. The Americans said at first they would offer Lebanon 200,000 tons of wheat then changed that to 150,000 tons. We contacted them through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and supplied all data requested by Washington. We were asked about smuggling, among other questions. Of course they have adequate information and reports on the subject. We later heard that they cancelled their promised aid. When I met the U.S. charge d'affaires in Beirut and asked why this sudden abrogation of his

country's aid he did not tell me it was because of smuggling. He said: "Other countries have more pressing need. You still have food but there are people in Ethiopia and Somalia who don't have one grain of wheat to eat. We found them more appropriate recipients of our wheat aid." I understood indirectly, however, that smuggling was the reason why aid stopped.

[Question] We talk about smuggling as if it is the normal thing to do. What measures have you taken to combat smuggling and prevent further worsening of the bread shortage?

[Answer] You are well aware of the state of affairs in the country. Can the state control all territories? It is impossible. We don't have the capability to control all land and sea outlets. Can we control the borders? I am a minister of economy and I work in my office. My job is to plan, set prices, and provide guidance and supervision. I have no power over the entire Lebanon in order to prevent smuggling especially that all the borders are open. Everybody knows that.

[Question] Do you expect that Lebanon will be receiving commodity aid soon? How about a special fund to help emigrants who are suffering immensely as a result of the war?

[Answer] We have received many promises of aid.

[Question] From whom?

[Answer] From European nations, it seems. There are also promises of aid from the Americans and Canada also. All the countries that are able promised to send aid in such form as rice, sugar, canned goods, and other staples. Such aid is directed to the Ministry of Social Affairs and to the Higher Authority for Relief. As a ministry, we have nothing to do with them.

As to a fund for emigrant relief, I think it is necessary and I am all for it. I believe the Chamber of Deputies has approved an appropriation to help emigrants but I do not know where such funds go. I have nothing to do with the matter.

[Question] Are you considering a visit to the Arab world soon in order to explain Lebanon's economic situation and solicit aid from countries able to give it?

[Answer] I have very good relations with everybody but I really can't leave the country now in light of current problems. I might make such a tour in the future, though. I have some sensitive portfolios that demand daily attention. It is not possible to procrastinate when dealing with people's affairs. Of course, the president and Premier al-Huss have made several such trips but I do not see that they lead to any positive results.

[Question] Are the current difficult living conditions jeopardizing the system of free economy?

[Answer] I don't believe so. Of course, there are parties that demand changes but I believe it would be suicide for Lebanon without a free economy. If the Lebanese were able to survive those past 13 years, it is because they have drawn on a foundation made possible by the system of free economy. Lebanon, as you know, is of a special economic nature. It is without raw materials or agriculture of consequence and has always based its economy on services. Lebanon could not survive if we gave up those services and abandoned the freedom to import or export currency at will. This freedom also allows the influx of aid from expatriates in Arab or Western countries. It would be suicidal, as I said, to abandon the system of free economy.

Our reading of the people in general, the Chamber of Deputies in particular, and even leftist parties, is that no one favors a guided economy. Everybody upholds the system of free economy. Our government won a parliamentary vote of confidence on the basis of a platform that adopts a free economy in Lebanon.

[Question] How do you view the call to sell gold and use the proceeds to buy a basket of currencies in order to support Lebanese currency and boost the economy? How do you view the softening of the lira vis a vis the dollar and other currencies?

[answer] I am in favor of selling some of our gold, not all of it provided this is supervised by a committee that has the people's confidence. Part of the proceeds should go into a fund to stabilize the national currency by utilizing the return on sales in foreign currencies. People would automatically stop changing their funds into dollars if they knew that the Central Bank is holding a million or a half a million dollars in order to stabilize the Lebanese currency. The dollar here commands a psychological price. People will no longer buy dollars when they have confidence and know that the Central Bank holds a block of foreign currencies and can participate in dollar markets at will, as buyer or seller.

[Question] Do you expect that 1988 will see the beginning of a solution to economic problems in Lebanon?

[Answer] We should always have hope in the future.

[Question] Hope does not feed hungry mouths, does not light homes, and does not fuel cars. People demand food, electricity, and gasoline.

[Answer] God will provide. It really is sad to see people in real difficulty. I know that there are Lebanese who are unable to move or make a living while others live in luxury. But, what can we do? What do we have but patience and hope?

SAUDI ARABIA

Vice-Governor Expounds Aspects of Progress in Eastern Province

44040117 London AL-HAWADITH in Arabic
19 Feb 88 pp 30-31

[Interview with Prince Fahd Ibn Salman, Deputy Governor of Eastern Province, in al-Dammam; Date not Given]

[Text] Even though the Eastern Province of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was one of the first parts of the Arabian Peninsula to be inhabited, this province has become the main oil production region in Saudi Arabia since oil was discovered in the kingdom in 1935. Thanks to the development plans, the province has turned into a modern area with trees, flowers and green grass.

Prince Muhammad Ibn Fahd Ibn 'Abd-al-'Aziz, the province governor, diligently runs the affairs of the province, including its economic, developmental and Arab and foreign labor affairs. He is assisted by Prince Fahd Ibn Salman, his deputy, whom AL-HAWADITH interviewed while Prince Muhammad was abroad. The following interview attests to the wisdom of the kingdom's reliance on the youth element.

[Question] Has the Eastern Province development plan achieved all its objectives?

[Answer] Some of these objectives have been achieved and others are under implementation. A third part of the objectives is under study.

The governorate's main role is to protect security and to handle the citizens' complaints against any party, be it a government agency or another citizen. The government also has the responsibility of coordinating with the other government agencies so that the Eastern Province demands may be met and that the various government branches may be assisted to achieve whatever they wish to achieve in the Eastern Province. During his frequent visits to the kingdom's various provinces, the custodian of the two holy mosques familiarizes himself with the needs of these provinces. It is well known that central planning is done in Riyadh and that Eastern Province officials go to Riyadh to request the implementation of their province projects as part of the kingdom's general 5-year Development Plan. We seek to accomplish a lot and we are, God willing, on the path to accomplishing it.

[Question] Does the Eastern Province suffer from the inflation phenomenon?

[Answer] Absolutely not. The latest statistics I have seen on the world's most expensive cities place the kingdom's cities at the bottom of the list. Prices are watched daily and whoever allows himself to manipulate the prices is

jailed. King Fahd Ibn 'Abd-al-'Aziz has declared via television that whoever permits himself to manipulate the prices in this phase must be punished.

[Question] There is a pioneer scientific renaissance in the Eastern Province. The most prominent feature of this renaissance is the creation of King Fahd University which includes more than 5,000 students and which, it is said, relies on untransferred technology. What is meant by untransferred technology?

[Answer] Our future is in research and in continued spending on research. We have a number of Saudi experts—doctorate holders and professors—each of whom is an expert in his field. We will always be proud of these experts. They engage in research and come up with results. Through our research, we have been able to develop the technology which we had wished to acquire from the western countries and others and which they were unwilling to supply. We have reached the point where we possess our own unimported technology. This research is still in its initial stages.

[Question] You have established an incentive educational award that has motivated numerous students to excel educationally. Has the Prince Muhammad Award achieved its desired objective?

[Answer] There is no doubt that the major annual Prince Muhammad Award ceremony, held on a certain day of the year in the Eastern Province and attended by the province's and kingdom's notables, men of letters and educators, is a big incentive for competition among the students. Outstanding students get rewarded and, at the same time, every student exerts efforts to graduate and to forge ahead with his educational life. This award is like the Oscar which many actors do not need. But when appreciated and honored publicly by others, these actors feel gratified. Our award is, God be thanked, for learning and for the learned in all parts of the kingdom.

[Question] A large number of non-Saudis, including Arabs and foreigners, live in the Eastern Province. Do they face any difficulties or are they offered special facilities?

[Answer] The province council is open to anybody who has a complaint against a Saudi or a non-Saudi. I recall numerous cases in which Saudi citizens were punished for an injustice done a foreigner. Right is right. I am in constant and direct contact with all the foreign communities, be they European, other western communities, Asian or Arab communities. We always try to meet with these communities. Through this interview, I appeal to anybody who is illegally subjected to a hardship or a crisis to present his case to us without any fear. I am prepared to put up in my own residence those who are truly wronged and needy and who are afraid of something until their problem is solved.

However, if a businessman or a company owner cannot, because of lack of liquidity, pay the wages of his Arab and foreign employees, we tell such employees: We in the province are prepared to provide you with a return ticket to your country. You can give a law office, the province or even your country's embassy the power of attorney to pursue your case instead of staying here without a job or wages. There is another solution. If you can find another job, you may transfer your "guarantee" from one employer to another. We are prepared to help you in this regard. It is regrettable that some foreigners are determined not to transfer their guarantee and not to leave the country. So they stay here, thus exposing themselves to problems and to regrettable incidents because of their own mistake.

[Question] Are Arabs working in the kingdom subjected to harassment?

[Answer] No. Rather, I personally provide them with facilities. Whenever I receive a note from an Arab capable of finding work in the country and requesting to stay here, I attach "no objection" to the note without even examining the details, especially if the person is from Lebanon or Palestine because we are aware of the circumstances being undergone by the citizens of these two countries.

I recall a certain case in which an unpleasant dispute erupted between an employer and a number of his workers. The employer complained to me about the workers. We examined their case, brought them here and got them to pledge not to resume the activity causing the complaint. They returned to their work but then the employer came to me and demanded that I deport them. I refused and said to him: These workers have come as expatriates from their countries where they could not find work. You should thank God who has blessed you in your country whereas your forefathers had to go to India and all other places to look for work. Now that you have been blessed, you think that the blessing has always been here. But blessings come here today and go elsewhere tomorrow. So let the workers earn their livelihood, trust in God and have peace. As for you, you will get your reward from God someday, God willing. The employer repented and the problem ended.

[Question] You are in charge of an area where most of the oil wells exist. Is the oil adequately protected or is it exposed to any challenge that may ruin this resource?

[Answer] God is the main protector. We, the ministries concerned and the government do our utmost in this regard. God be thanked, no incident has occurred so far at the oil sites or elsewhere.

[Question] Is the oil protected against international ambitions?

[Answer] We protect the oil with our lives. Whoever wishes to seize the oil must first take our lives away. If there is no justice in the world, we will be able to do nothing.

[Question] What is the future of the oil prices?

[Answer] The kingdom's oil policy is well known. The kingdom believes that it is an indivisible part of the entire world. Oil is a commodity used in all parts of the world and a commodity to which the world's civilizations are tied. We have no desire to tamper with people's destiny and future. We wish to sell a commodity beneficial to all at reasonable prices. As long as prices of the products of other nations remain reasonable, oil prices will stay as they are. What we hope for is that all the OPEC members will embrace the Saudi viewpoint because it represents OPEC's future interest, not its immediate interest over the next 3 or 4 years. It is not a viewpoint with a specific objective at heart. Rather, it is a viewpoint that primarily has the world's interest and the interest of OPEC members at heart.

[Question] Are the kingdom's economic development plans achieving their objectives or are there difficulties obstructing the benefits due from these plans?

[Answer] I studied in the United States where some universities receive requests from some countries to conduct studies on their development plans and other plans. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was one of those countries which requested advice from several circles, including a university. What happens ordinarily is that the university examines its files in search of a country with similar conditions so as to make a comparison between the two countries. But after searching all its files, the university concerned could not find a country with conditions similar to those of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia because whenever we implemented a project, we found that we needed a bigger project to meet the rising expectations. We kept up pace with the needs and provided whatever served the citizen. If you now look from a plane at Riyadh, al-Dammam or at any of the kingdom's other cities, you will notice the vastness of these cities and the width of their roads and streets which will absorb future expansion.

[Question] Is agriculture developing in the kingdom generally and in the Eastern Province in particular?

[Answer] Thanks to God, the government assists farmers with land, money and machinery, thus enabling them to sell their products in the market at a profit. In the Eastern Province which has been known throughout history for its dates, especially in the areas of al-Hasa and al-Qatif, the conditions are ready for those who want to engage in agriculture, with government help. There is a joint-stock company engaged in cultivating wheat and other grains. In the past, the government offered greater

assistance as an incentive. Naturally this assistance has now decreased, considering that a grain farm owner is fully guaranteed a profit, provided that he is a serious farmer.

[Question] Is the kingdom's wheat production enough to meet its needs?

[Answer] Of course. Moreover, we export local production to the outside world.

[Question] Has the wheat production cost decreased?

[Answer] Research is underway to further reduce the cost which, I believe, has dropped below the past level. With continued research, it is expected that the cost will continue to decrease.

Our main problem is the problem of water supply. We constantly try to use new methods to provide water, such as exploiting modern means to purify sewage water and re-use it for agriculture. As a result of the enormous proliferation of farms in the kingdom, the continued drilling of artesian wells and the use of such well water may lead to a water shortage in the country. We try to regulate the use of artesian well water in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture which determines the volume of water each farm is allowed so that a balance may be established between the volume of water withdrawn from artesian wells and the volume of water with which rain replenishes the wells. Through rationalization, through the purification and re-use of sewage water for agriculture and through regulating the use of artesian well water, we can have agriculture and abundant water at the same time.

[Question] Have the social (services) which the government provides the citizens reached their full limit?

[Answer] These services are the result of programs formulated by the ministries concerned. If the citizens would wait until municipal services are available to their lands before they start building, they would save themselves a lot of trouble. But everybody prefers to build and then request the services. These services are provided in accordance with scheduled plans and these plans must be observed in order to avoid chaos. For example, the citizens are now complaining about the closure of some new streets. But those who build before the services are delivered must put up with such inconvenience.

[Question] Has the world economic recession had any ramifications on the kingdom's economy, especially in the commercial and financial fields, and has it led to reducing the subsidies which the government provides to the citizens?

[Answer] Not at all. It is said that there is an international economic recession. If so, then in comparison with what? If the comparison is with the astronomical prices

stocks and goods reached in the past, then those prices were unjustifiable. The world expected prices and profits to continue to rise. But this would be unnatural. What goes up must come down.

As for the kingdom, the budgets were larger by virtue of our oil production volume and of high oil prices. Those budgets were used, God be thanked, to complete the country's infrastructures in all areas. The phase we are undergoing now is the phase of exploiting the existing assets and of bolstering whatever needs to be bolstered. Anyone who visited the kingdom 15 to 20 years ago and visits it again today would appreciate the accomplishments that have been made. The conditions have now returned to normal insofar as land and real estate prices are concerned. We are now experiencing normal conditions. What is abnormal is the past spurt.

The world goes through ups and downs, according to world economic indicators. In some cases, certain countries borrow. When the time for repayment arrives, such countries devalue their currencies so that they may be able to repay at a lower cost. They then raise the price of the currency at a later phase. Every condition has its positive and negative factors. We are an indivisible part of this world. Consequently, we try as hard as we can to distance our oil production from anything that can be affected by crises, considering that this production is connected with our future and the world's future. God be thanked that our situation is as good as it should be. All people have to do is to organize their income and their spending and conditions will be better.

As for people who wish to live a life of financial chaos, as is the case with some families or some individuals who have no adequate financial background, then they have to shoulder the consequences of their errors. But people who can save will find that everything is available. Education and healthcare are free and subsidies are given even for camels and sheep.

This country's distinction is that if a rich man goes broke, people help him and side with the state in supporting him. In other countries, concern for man is commensurate with his financial weight solely. For example, if a poor man is subjected to an injustice in this province and he comes and tells us that he is harmed by the verdict issued against him and asks us to pardon and help him, one finds that everybody tries to help such a man. There are those who complain of intercession. The truth is that what is needed is intervention to do good. In our offices and jobs, we are intermediaries for all people. If intervention helps lead to a good deed, then this is what we want.

[Question] Has the Gulf war had a negative impact on the Saudi economy?

[Answer] There is no doubt that the Gulf war has had an impact on the economy of all of the area's countries, including the kingdom which is an indivisible part of the

Gulf area. The more peaceful the Gulf is, the better its economic yield will be. This war between Iraq and Iran has devoured everything and has, regrettably, squandered vast capabilities. The only beneficiary of this war are other countries.

[Question] How can this war be ended?

[Answer] By returning to God's book. Both countries are Muslim countries and all they have to do is read God's book and implement its dictates so that the situation may end in reconciliation. We thank God for the ceaseless efforts made with both countries. God willing, the brothers in Iran will be guided toward ending this conflict.

[Question] Has the causeway between the kingdom and Bahrain produced a beneficial economic yield and has it achieved its objectives?

[Answer] There are in this world signs and manifestations of the fraternity and friendship binding countries together. Some of these manifestations take the form of an immediate unity which ultimately leads to an unnecessary loss of lives and property without producing any benefit. The other type of unity comes through sound action. When we say that the Arabs are our brothers, we put our money where our mouth is. Bahrain is a sisterly Arab country. If you compare family names in the Bahrain and Saudi telephone directories, you will find that the names in the two sisterly countries are similar. Bahrain has extended its hand to us and we have extended our hand to her. The bridge between us is a reflection of the extension and unity of these two hands. What is more important than the economic yield that will be produced in the long run is the social yield of this bridge which is one of the fruits of the GCC. What we seek is everlasting, not just long-range, communication. The international banks are prepared to provide us and Bahrain with loans. But we do not need such loans. We thank God that the bridge is in operation now. It has produced a good economic yield for Bahrain and for our merchants in al-Khubar and al-Dammam. There is an economic yield for both sides and communication between them is now better.

[Question] Has the GCC experience succeeded?

[Answer] There is no doubt that it is a very successful experience. The most significant reason for its success is that the initial phase was successful. Consequently, the final phase must also be inevitably successful. Everything was organized. Short strides were made but they ended up being major strides because they were cohesive. Gradually, the desired objective was achieved. I assure you that because of the GCC, social communication between the GCC's six members is amazing. Relations between people have improved and trade, traffic and other local regulations have become similar. We started with small things and we will gradually achieve the desired objective, namely the Gulf unity which will

be for all the Arabs. Taking dazzling steps may not serve the purpose and it may be better to take less dazzling steps that do serve the purpose. This is what is actually happening.

[Question] Prince Salman Ibn 'Abd-al-'Aziz, the governor of Riyadh Province, called for a campaign to support the occupied Arab territories' uprising. This campaign has achieved and exceeded its objectives and has reaffirmed the Saudi generosity and the spontaneous Saudi sympathy for the uprising and for the Arab causes. What has the Eastern Province done in this connection?

[Answer] It has done the same thing. Prince Salman's program applies to the kingdom in its entirety. This is a trend embraced in all of the kingdom's agencies. We are doing the same thing and we have begun to collect donations. Matters are moving as well as one could wish. With their national awareness, people are constantly making donations for Afghanistan, Palestine and other places. However, there are things that are publicized and things that are not.

08494

Symposium of Youths Supports King's Calls for Draft System

44040100 London AL-TADAMUN in Arabic
30 Jan 88 pp 62-63

[Text] Last November, King Fahd met with commanders and officers of the Armed Forces, the National Guard and General Security at al-Salam Palace in Jeddah. The meeting could have been an ordinary one, similar to many other meetings between the king and his subjects, but the issue raised by the Saudi monarch in this meeting was a turning point toward giving Saudi youth the responsibility of preserving and safeguarding Saudi accomplishments.

In this meeting, King Fahd talked about the importance of a 2-year military service for Saudi youth, with the option to leave or re-enlist. He emphasized the need to attract young men scientifically qualified to receive training in modern technology so wisely used in all Saudi military services. The king's call had great appeal among Saudi youth, and the Ministry of Defense and Aviation prepared a number of scientific reports and studies that are sure to realize the Saudi monarch's wish. Chief-of-General-Staff General Muhammad al-Hamad said that enlistment of qualified youth in the Armed Forces will allow them to acquire new skills and expertise and additional scientific and technical knowledge that only the Armed Forces can offer through modern weapons systems that represent a sophisticated phase in 20th century technology. Moreover, a draft system will allow the expansion of field formations and technical support services.

The ministry has embarked on a modernization and reconstruction program aimed at expanding the area, size and holding capacity of some military training facilities.

To discuss this issue, AL-TADAMUN held a round table symposium with a group of Saudi college students to give them a change to express their views on King Fahd's call.

The symposium included Muhammad 'Umar Rashid (Computer College, 24 years), Khalid 'Uthman al-'Ammuri (Computer College, 23 years), Tariq Ahmad Basuwayd (Administrative Sciences College, 23 years), 'Abdallah 'Ali al-Shuhari (Sociology Department, Fine Arts College, 22 years), Muhammad 'Ali Hilal al-Ghamidi (College of Medicine, 21 years), Muhammad Fahd al-Nimran (Administrative Sciences College, 20 years), 'Abdallah Salih al-Ghamidi (Science College, Chemistry Department, 21 years), 'Ali Sattur al-Ghamidi (Social Services Department, Fine Arts College, 22 years).

Benefits and Advantages:

The symposium focused on one issue: the effects of King Fahd's call on youth and media coverage of its impact in their midst.

Muhammad Rashid said: "Military life is a requirement and a national duty. Young men must enlist into the service because military life helps them in their life and their future in general."

Tariq Basuwayd adds: "Besides it being a national service, military life has many benefits and advantages as a career. The military field has a multitude of services with a variety of interests and endeavors that require scientific specializations such as medicine, management and engineering, which are a requirement and necessity in military fields. Military services offer young men the opportunity to satisfy their future ambitions and desires to advance in their fields of endeavor."

Khalid al-'Ammuri gave a novel opinion: Young people used to be ignorant of many things. Some wanted to join the military service, but their grade average did not allow them to do so. King Fahd's call gives such young men a chance. Actually, prior to this call, the opportunities of university students entering military academies were very limited. Therefore, only graduates of medicine, science, engineering and computer are admitted at the present time, while arts and education students do not have this opportunity.

AL-TADAMUN: After graduation, what field do you plan to enter?

Khalid al-'Ammuri: I hope to join the Interior Ministry which is into the computer field, my area of specialization. This is a good opportunity for work and continued education.

Muhammad Rashid: I, too, am considering the same thing.

Tariq Basuwayd: I plan to join any military service where I can use my education and specialization and be close to home.

At this point, the participants agreed on the importance of expanding military high schools with a view to preparing young men to join the military field by enrolling in military academies or pursuing a military career.

Khalid al-'Ammuri considered some enrollment barriers, such as required high grade averages, written tests and personal interviews. The King Fahd Police Academy this year admitted only 500 out of about 4,000 applicants.

Media Failure:

AL-TADAMUN: How do you view the role of the media in this regard?

Tariq Basuwayd: The media has failed to educate and enlighten the youth and to introduce them to the various military services and work. More space and quality coverage must be dedicated to this critical subject.

Khalid al-'Ammuri interrupts: The media must also inform the public about the benefits and advantages of the different military services, requirements for admission, curricula and training.

Tariq Basuwayd proposed that military academy officials visit schools to lecture and hold symposiums for high school and college students to explain academic requirements and courses as a good way to familiarize them with military academies, schools and colleges about which young people know very little.

On Call:

'Abdallah 'Ali al-Shuhari: I have thought about military service and King Fahd's call is a good idea. I believe it is the duty of every young man to serve his country and to be ready to answer his monarch's call. No young man will hesitate to do so, but I believe that it is better to keep it voluntary because those who have the desire and inclination will choose the military career that suits their desires and tastes.

Muhammad al-Ghamidi: Saudi Arabia needs young men in other fields as well, such as the sciences. Nonetheless, it is necessary for half of the high school graduates to join the military services. As for me, after graduating from the medical college, I plan to join a military service where I can practice my profession. I believe that the military services are very important and need our services more than any other field. This will give me an opportunity to continue my medical studies and advance in my field of specialization.

Muhammad al-Ghamidi wished for more extensive media coverage of various military services so that recruits would not suffer a shock. Admission must be expanded, for only a few hundred out of thousands of applicants are accepted at a time when universities are limiting their admission.

The Draft:

Al-Ghamidi supports the demand for a draft system that offers graduates an opportunity to practice their profession. Otherwise, a doctor, for example, who is unable to practice his profession for 2 years after graduation, can suffer career setbacks.

'Abdallah al-Ghamidi (Chemistry Department, College of Sciences): Ever since I was in high school, I have considered a military career, but my parents are trying to dissuade me for my own good. I will try to convince them to let me fulfill my desire to serve the country.

'Abdallah al-Ghamidi supports the idea of the draft, as put forth by Muhammad al-Ghamidi. He believes it is possible to set a draft age for military service.

Muhammad al-Nimran: This idea should have been adopted some time ago to achieve self-sufficiency in military services. No one will hesitate to answer the monarch's call to duty in defense of the country's honor and sanctity. I believe that we, as Saudi youth, have many opportunities available to us. To augment the number of people going into the military service, and in view of our small population, the female sector must be tapped. The fact is that most women have nothing to do but wait for a knight to arrive on his white horse.

Muhammad al-Nimran sets the end of high school education as the draft age, saying that this would help students find out what they want and what their interests are instead of rushing off to college. After the draft, they would have a much better idea of whether they want to enter public life, go to college or re-enlist in the service.

'Ali al-Ghamidi explains that King Fahd's call came at the right time in the wake of wide-spread education: "The draft is an excellent idea. Lacking the propensity for military life, military service following graduation will open doors for me in the social services field which is very close to the military service field. Muhammad al-Nimran's call for female recruitment must not place undue pressures on women who are limited to a few fields such as medicine and education."

Al-Ghamidi believes that the draft ought to be voluntary after high school in the form of training camps open to those who wish to join the service. Willing recruits are more productive.

Here, Muhammad al-Nimran retorted: In this case, no one will enlist.

Military High Schools:

The participants agreed on the idea to have military high schools. Muhammad al-Nimran said: In high school, 18 out of 27 of us wanted to join the service.

'Abdallah al-Ghamidi interjected: Everyone is ready to carry arms in answer to the call. This requires military training as part of the general education and a more advance scouting process in the intermediate phase to learn basic military concepts and military order and discipline, in addition to building the military's image so that it would have a great effect on shaping young people's disposition toward these services.

Enlightenment and Persuasion:

'Ali al-Ghamidi said that the media's role should be limited to persuading and enlightening rather than playing a really big role. He said that the call should be sincere and slogan-free aimed at enlightening and educating. The focus must be on small children and students to create a serious attitude toward life and promote self-reliance, order and discipline.

Muhammad al-Nimran says that the media must promote and intensify patriotism as a motivation to enter this field, and to show interest in young people to give them a feeling of self-worth. This comes with care and attention on the part of all social institution, led by the Ministry of Information and Education.

Civics Course:

'Ali al-Ghamidi adds: The role of the schools is very important. The value of military service must be inculcated at manhood. I believe it is important to introduce a civics course in elementary and intermediate schools to discuss the state and its role among nations and the role of the individual in society. Moreover, efforts must be made to augment social homogeneity and cohesion through visits to districts, factories and military services to see what they are really like, concentrating on bringing out military heroism and advantages of military life for young people to emulate. This can be done through well-considered unadorned scientific techniques. For example, public relations departments of the different services must specialize in communications and must be familiar with its role, potentials and effective use as a means of getting the message through.

Muhammad al-Nimran suggests reaching the uneducated youth because the military field offers them an opportunity to get an education and training which will be of benefit to both sides and will attract them to the process of development.

TUNISIA

Water Supply, Infrastructure Development for Saharan Tourism

46200015 Frankfurt/Main FRANKFURTER
ZEITUNG/BLICK DURCH DIE WIRTSCHAFT in
German 13 Jan 88 p 2

[Article by W. An., Frankfurt: "Tunisia Develops Sahara Tourism; New Hotel Projects in Planning Stage; Transportation Links Are To Be Improved"]

[Text] Tunisia had a favorable year for tourism in 1987. During the first 9 months of 1987 the number of entries increased to 1,509,000 as against 1,183,000 during the same period in 1986. The number of overnight stays increased to 15,009,000 as compared with nearly 11 million during the first 9 months of 1986. Foreign exchange receipts from tourism during the first 11 months of 1987 rose to 500.8 million dinars. In the comparable period of 1986 the figure was 355.8 million dinars. In 1987 roughly 87,000 tourist beds were used while in 1986 82,207 hotel beds were available. During the first 9 months of 1987 the French, with 421,100 entries, constituted the most important tourist group ahead of the Germans with 343,870.

In the case of overnight stays the German tourists with 4.7 million held first place ahead of the French with 3.8 million. Tunisian tourism is primarily concentrated on the regions of Nabeul-Hamamet, Sousse-Qairouan, Monastir-Sfax, and Jerba-Zarzis. In addition to the Bizerte-Tabarqa region in the country's north, Sahara tourism is to be promoted and developed more than heretofore in the south and is to contribute to the further expansion of tourism. The government has taken a series of measures to facilitate investments.

Almost half of Tunisia's area covering the administrative districts of Tozeur, Kebili, Tataouine, Gafsa, and Medenine, is suitable for Sahara tourism where excursions and tours can be undertaken. Desert tourism is an additional expansion of Tunisian tourism in which thus far beach tourism at the coast has been dominant. Compared with the tourism zones at the Mediterranean, Sahara tourism is underdeveloped. In 1987 there were about 4,222 hotel beds there and in 1986 only about 420,000 overnight stays occurred there, about 3.4 percent of the total number in Tunisia.

Based on studies, at first 4 tourist complexes are to be built for the development of Sahara tourism. Involved in the first place is the Tozeur Oasis complex where an accommodations capacity of 1,300 beds is to be built on an area of 36.5 hectares. For the Nefta Oasis with its large date palm stand, 2 sites have been chosen, one of them 13 hectares for 700 beds and the second 19.5 hectares for 440 beds. Development work has been started here as has already been the case in Tozeur. In Douz a 1,700-bed capacity has been planned for an area of 45 hectares and in Kebili, a capacity of 1,200 beds also on 45 hectares. Development work in Douz and Kebili will be started in the near future.

In addition to the development of the water and energy supply as well as the telecommunications system, the transportation in particular infrastructure is to be improved. For the arrival of tourists there is an airport on Jerba Island and one at the Tozeur Oasis which is especially suitable. Its capacity has had only little use recently since landing at Touzeur did not pay for the airlines because of the small accommodation capacity in Tunisia's south. In 1986, 25,754 passengers were processed. Especially for organizing of tours the road network is inadequate, particularly at the north and south bank of the Shott El Jerid. At the same time, construction of 7 hotels with a total of 1,280 beds has been approved; they are to be built in Douz, Kebili, Tozeur, El Hamma, and Gabes. Additional new hotel projects are now in the planning stage.

The hotels open to receive guests in the Nefta Oasis include the modern Sahara Palace Hotel which belongs to the chain of the Pullmann International Hotels into which the Compagnie Internationale des Wagons-Lits et du Tourisme S.A., Paris/Brussels, has bracketed its hotel holdings. It has 99 air-conditioned rooms, including 9 suites, a restaurant, a bar, a nightclub, a swimming pool, and a boutique. Since the end of 1986, Club Mediterranee, Paris is represented in Tozeur with a new vacation resort (120 beds) with swimming pool and tennis courts.

The Oasis Hotel (196 beds) was reopened in Gabes in the spring of 1987 after its renovation by the Societe de Developpement du Tourisme Saharien. The Societe Douz Hotel S.A. has planned a hotel with 230 beds for Douz, a hotel that is to be opened in 1989. It is to include a restaurant, a bar, a multipurpose hall, and a swimming pool. The Continental Hotel (300 beds) in Tozeur is part of the holdings of Tahar Fourati Travel et Hotels, Hamamet. As another hotel for Tozeur, the Oasis Hotel (92 beds) is to be mentioned, which was built by the state Societe Hoteliere et Touristique de Tunisie (SHTT), Monastir.

12356

IRAN

Syria To Provide Port Facilities to IRI

46400086d London KEYHAN in Persian 4 Feb 88 p 4

[Text] In order to create facilities for exporting goods to European countries, the Islamic Republic plans to establish two large shipping companies in Syria with the participation of the Syrian government. With the formation of these two companies Iranian merchants will send their export goods to Syria by way of Turkey. This country in turn, by making port facilities available, will send the Islamic Republic's goods and materials by ship to world markets. The news of the possibility of forming two shipping companies with the participation of Syria was given to the media representatives recently by Ahmad Madani, deputy minister of roads and transportation. The Islamic Republic's deputy minister of roads and transportation was recently sent to Damascus to meet and speak with Ministry of Roads and Transportation officials. He announced that Iran's daily increasing non-petroleum exports and the shipment of these goods to European destinations have led the Islamic Republic's Ministry of Roads and Transportation and Syrian shipping officials to study the idea of establishing two shipping companies, one for overland cargo and one for maritime shipping, with the participation of both countries.

The Islamic Republic's deputy minister of roads and transportation announced that the responsibility for shipping Iran's exported products, to be taken overland to Syria's Mediterranean ports, will be borne by the Islamic Republic's commercial and freight ships.

9310

IRI To Invest 1.8 Billion Dollars in Petrochemical Industries

46400085a London KEYHAN in Persian 4 Feb 88 p 4

[Text] The Islamic Republic plans to save \$950 million in foreign exchange annually by implementing a five-year petrochemical industries project. Investments for these projects have been estimated at a total of \$1.8 billion, and it is expected that these petrochemical projects will pay for themselves after two years of operation. According to estimates by the National Petrochemical Company, if the plans for the petrochemical projects are completed, the Islamic Republic will be able to produce some 2.3 million tons of major petrochemical products. The National Petrochemical Company's calculations show that about 7,100 employees will be needed to implement these projects, and in view of the fact that there are now about 9,200 persons working in the nation's petrochemical industries, the number of personnel in this sector of the economy will increase to about 16,300 in the future.

Gholamreza Aqazadeh, the Islamic Republic's minister of petroleum, recently gave a press conference. He said: In order to escape the status of a one-item exporter, the Islamic Republic plans to export petrochemical products, and to try to make the export of these substances a major portion of the nation's exports.

The minister of petroleum of the Islamic Republic told representatives of the media: The idea of creating petrochemical industries in Iran is 25 years old, and the goal in doing so has been to produce various petrochemical and chemical substances and their by-products obtained from petroleum, petroleum extracts, natural gasses and other raw materials from the organic to the mineral. This will be accomplished by making use of petroleum hydrocarbons, which are abundant in Iran, using scientific and industrial principles and methods. Large quantities of them are obtained in the extraction of oil, and for many years have been burned as waste. By converting these hydrocarbons to intermediate and complete petrochemical products, the country's needs for these products will be met and the country's foreign exchange needs will also be answered through the export of these products.

During his press conference, Gholamreza Aqazadeh noted that in the period from 1360 to 1364 [21 March 1981 - 20 March 1986] alone more than \$48,837.5 million in foreign exchange was spent importing petrochemical products.

With regard to the activities of the National Petrochemical Company, he said: The National Petrochemical Company's activities are in three major parts: The first consists of the existing factories built or expanded in the past, the second is the five-year plans for 1367 - 1371 [21 March 1988 - 20 March 1993], whose budget has been allocated and has been formed as part of projects being implemented, and finally the five-year plans for 1372 - 1376 [21 March 1993 - 20 March 1998], whose preliminary studies have been designated, for which a schedule is being made.

Continuing his comments, the Islamic Republic's minister of petroleum told correspondents: Currently there are 9,252 employees working in the National Petrochemical Company's affiliated and staff units. Likewise, in the five-year plan (1367 - 1371) the number of employees will be increased by 1,279 persons before operations begin and by 5,830 after operations begin. In the 1372 - 1376 five-year plan, more than 2,519 persons will be hired.

The Islamic Republic's minister of petroleum Gholamreza Aqazadeh discussed self-sufficiency and economizing on foreign exchange. He said: About \$950 million will be saved by not importing petrochemical products after the implementation of the five-year plan (1367 - 1371), and in view of the \$1,801 million in foreign exchange to be invested in this project, it will pay for

itself after two years of operation. On the other hand, at the end of this plan, the country will have produced 2.3 million tons of major petrochemical products.

At the end of his press conference, the Islamic Republic's minister of petroleum discussed the investment needed to implement the petrochemical industries expansion projects. He said: The implementation of the first five-year projects needs more precise information than the second. Likewise, the investment capital needed to implement the next five-year projects is about \$124.8 billion, of which the equivalent of 67.3 billion rials will be foreign exchange. As for the next five-year plans (1372 - 1376), for which there is less financial information available, about about 147 billion rials capital investment will be needed, of which 87.6 billion rials will be foreign exchange.

9310

Power Plant To Be Built in Kerman

46400085b London KEYHAN in Persian 4 Feb 88 p 4

[Text] The Tavanir Company, affiliated with the Ministry of Power, plans to build a 1,000-megawatt electrical power plant in Kerman. Tavanir Company officials recently began discussing the call for foreign contractors to carry out the project, and it is likely that a call for bids from contractors will soon be issued. According to the economic weekly MIDDLE EAST ECONOMIC DIGEST (London), the Czechoslovak Skoda company and the Yugoslav Smolt company are competing for the main Kerman power plant construction contract. The Yugoslavian Smolt company may offer to build the Kerman electrical power plant's steam pots, and the Czechoslovakian company Skoda will probably declare its willingness to produce and install the turbines. The weekly publication wrote: In addition to the probable construction of the 1,000-megawatt Kerman electrical power plant, the Islamic Republic's Ministry of Power is planning to build two more 1,000-megawatt power plants in the Province of Gilan and in Siyah Bisheh.

Although the plan to build the power plants in Siyah Bisheh and Gilan has been discussed for some time by Ministry of Power experts, construction operations for these two power plants have been suspended for several years due to financial difficulties and technical issues.

The MIDDLE EAST ECONOMIC DIGEST devoted part of its article to the activities of Yugoslav companies in the Islamic Republic. It wrote: In the last few years the Energo Projekt company has been able to sign several contracts with the Islamic Republic for the construction of small dams and various electrical power plants. The value of these plants has come to about \$2.3 million. One of the contracts signed between this company and the ministry was for the construction of a small crescent dam at the Soleyman pass. This dam, which is about 130

meters high, can produce about 30 megawatts of electrical power. In addition to that dam, the Yugoslav contractor will also build an earth dam 100 meters high, as well as a 300-megawatt electrical power plant in two other parts of the country.

9310

Call for Birth Certificate Change Reportedly Rebuffed

46400086c London KEYHAN in Persian 4 Feb 88 p 2

[Text] 'Ali Akbar Rahmani, general manager of the Islamic Republic's Census Bureau, announced: Despite the fact that 20 announcements have been issued to date by the Census Bureau and the Economic Mobilization Staff concerning the necessity for all Tehran residents to change birth certificates, the people of Tehran have not yet responded to any of these announcements, and they have caused us great concern by their failure to report to the Census Bureau.

Rahmani also said: It would seem that the residents of Tehran and Shemran do not wish to change their birth certificates, and that they are also concerned about exchanging them and using new birth certificates. According to Rahmani, to date out of Tehran's population of eight million so far only 380,000 persons have reported to obtain their new birth certificates.

He said: Under Article 46 of the Census Law, the Census Bureau has the right to announce the valid [expiration] dates for birth certificates, and therefore no organization or institution is authorized to provide services to those holding documents we have declared to be expired.

Birth certificates issued since the Islamic revolution expire throughout Iran at the end of the current year [20 March 1988], and in Tehran and Shemran birth certificates for those born in 1361 [21 March 1982 - 20 March 1983] expire at the end of the month of Dey [20 January] and birth certificates for those born in 1362 [21 March 1983 - 20 March 1984] expire at the end of the month of Bahman [19 February].

Rahmani added: When the population of Iran was 35 million, the Census Bureau 4,157 employees, but now when we need to have 6,000 persons, we have only 3,200 persons working with us.

He said: Since the revolution we have issued 900,000 birth certificates for persons born after the Islamic revolution.

9310

Population Growth Rate Second Worldwide

46400086b London KEYHAN in Persian

4 Feb 88 pp 1, 8

[Text] The population growth rate in Iran is 3.9 percent, and this is the second-highest rate in the world after Ghana. Recently 'Ali Akbar Rahmani, deputy minister of the interior and chief of the Census Bureau gave an interview to correspondents. He said: At this rate of growth, it is expected that the nation's population will double in the next 22 years, that it will reach 200 million in the next 45 years, and that it will reach one billion in 80 to 85 years. The Islamic Republic's deputy minister of interior discussed the Census Bureau's current activities and the issuance and exchanges of birth certificates in the year 1366 [21 March 1987 - 20 March 1988]. He said: Throughout 1366 we have been engaged in comprehensive activities in the areas of credit and education, as well as, increasing resources and manpower and obtaining important regulations from the government. In the first nine months of the current year more than nine million birth certificates have been issued to persons born in the current year and since the revolution.

'Ali Akbar Rahmani, deputy minister of interior and chief of the Census Bureau, discussed the compulsory plan for public fingerprinting enacted by the Majlis. He said: With the approval of the prime minister and the minister of interior, for the first time 1.5 million rials has been allocated in the budget for next year to carry out the public fingerprinting project, and the fingerprinting will be completed by the end of the period 1367 [21 March 1988 - 20 March 1989] to 1370 [21 March 1991 - 20 March 1992] at the latest. After that, every year at least 1.5 million persons will be fingerprinted as they turn 15 as a routine task of police and the Census Bureau.

9310

Houses Left Vacant Subject to Taxation

46400086a London KEYHAN in Persian 4 Feb 88 p 3

[Text] The Majlis continues to enact laws for direct taxation. Last week more articles from the Direct Taxation Law were passed. On the basis of one of its articles, houses and real estate left vacant and unused for more than six months will be subject to increased taxes.

According to this article, whenever residential real estate located in provincial centers and cities with populations of more than 100,000 persons are ready for rental and without legal obstacles remain vacant and unused for more than six consecutive months, for the remainder of that year they will be subject to monthly taxation of 0.2 percent of the commercial value, and should it remain vacant for more than a year it will be taxed at 0.4 percent per month. Whenever the property remains vacant for reasons beyond the owner's control, it will be tax-exempt during this period.

On the basis of other enacted articles, all unused lands within the municipalities which are kept idle without justification will be taxed at two percent of value the first two years after this law's enactment, at four percent for the next two years, and at five percent thereafter.

We note that the drop in the volume of oil exports, the decrease in its price per barrel, and the continuation of the war and its consequences have caused an increase in the Islamic government's budget deficit. For this reason, after the budget bill was submitted to the Majlis the government submitted several bills imposing new taxes as well as increasing existing taxes.

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4 April, 1988